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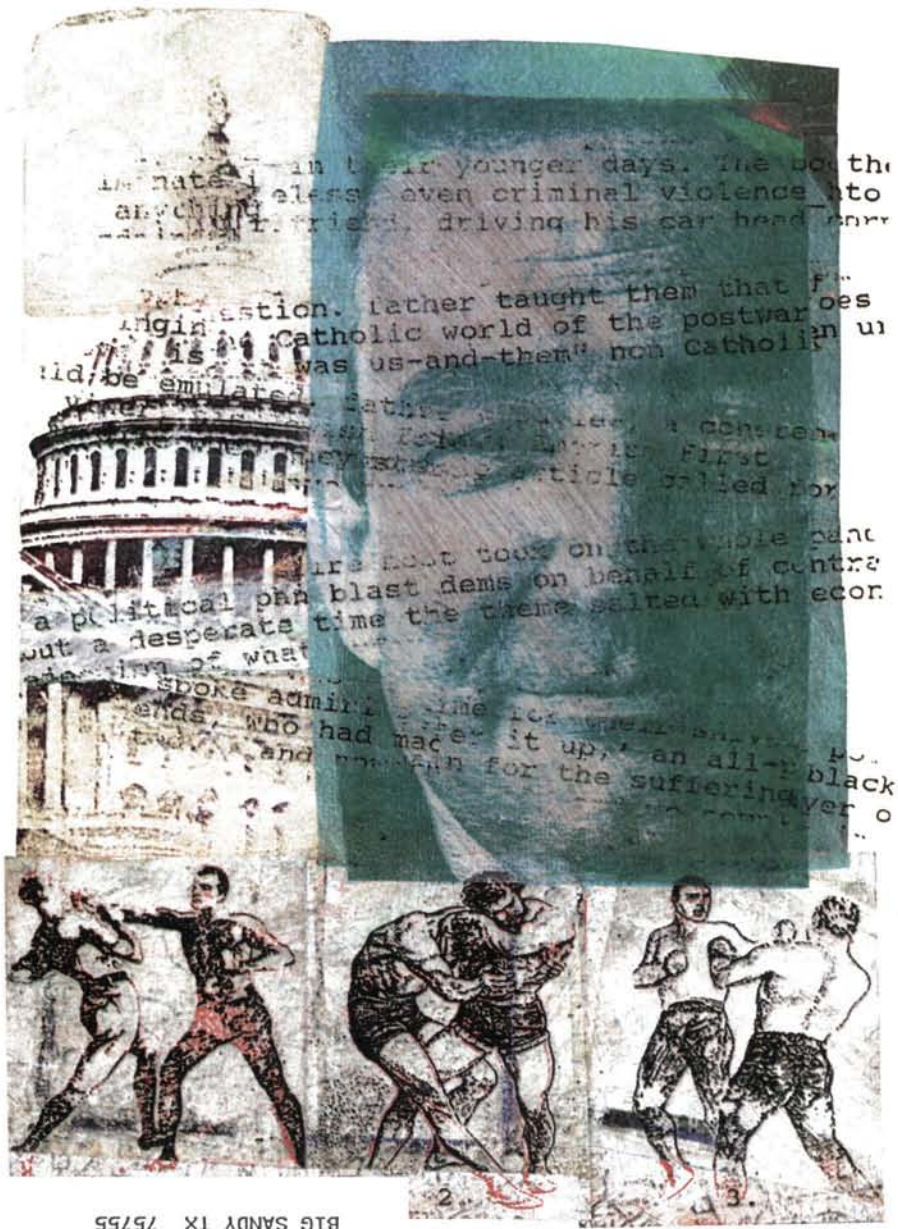

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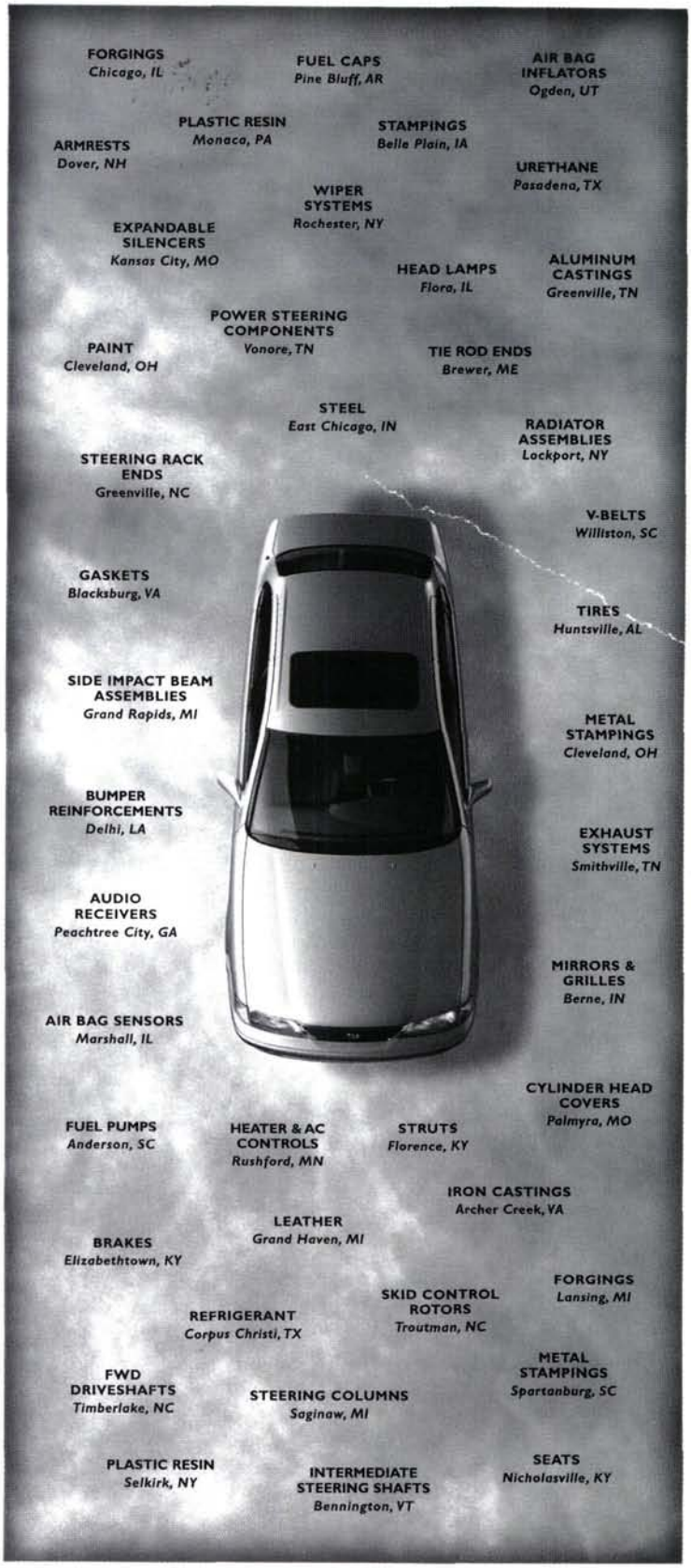

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JANUARY 22, 1996

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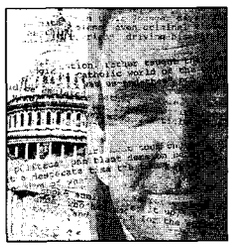

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CORRESPONDENCE

Bosnia's end-game

To the editors:

Long overdue, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera's debunking of the Bosnia myth ("When Peace Means War," December 18, 1995) is a refreshingly honest total analysis of reality—in sharp contrast to the sordid distortions and crass disinformation that for too long we've been fed, on our TV screens and editorial pages, as moral obligations, European paralysis, national interest and superpower responsibilities. In fact, born out of personal ambition and bullyboy muscle-flexing, the one-year Holbrooke ceasefire more and more begins to look like theater of the absurd with the last act to be written after the final curtain.

The bizarre exit policy casually introduced by Bill Clinton on "60 Minutes" on December 10: come the end of the term, we pack up and leave no matter what, never to come back again, coupled with the promise to be, during the truce, "even-handed but not neutral," reveals the shallow underpinning of the whole structure. As for creating "armed balance" in the region, presumably—after the Turks and Iranians have in the interim, with our blessing, rearmed the Muslims; Germany further bolstered its resurrected pet, Croatia, and a newly assertive Russia strengthened its ties to its historic protégé, Serbia—our high-tech, armored cast will find new employment on the Golan, perhaps in Chechnya or, if the '96 administration can properly manage the schedule, in that must gratifying of all scenarios, Northern Ireland....

As to Bosnia, with the United States and NATO gone and the three parties now armed to the teeth, round two promises to be more riveting than anything we've seen so far. Then again, maybe not: sometime during this one-year cram course in coexistence the three villains will be touched by grace, and will live happily thereafter practicing the newfound virtues of ethnic love, Balkan brotherhood and undying dedication to the pursuit of guilt-laden, open-ended foreign aid!

GEORGE VANDOR
Kirkland, Washington

To the editors:

Your December 18, 1995, editorial ("Why the Troops Should Go") supporting President Clinton's Bosnian intervention was right on point, with the exception of your aside noting that you did "not mean to suggest that Bill Clinton has become a figure of Rooseveltian dimensions."

Flipping your analogy, I'd say that if FDR had Bill Clinton's dimensions, my teenage sons would have dozens more cousins, aunts and uncles. We might be able to visit them in Israel or here in the States rather than being forced to mourn them at the U.S. Holocaust Museum.

The Bosnian Muslims should say thank God for Clinton, who puts his reelection at risk by trying to save innocent people. There is no record that FDR ever spent a moment even anguishing over the Holocaust, let alone doing anything about it.

M.J. ROSENBERG
Chevy Chase, Maryland

To the editors:

"Why the Troops Should Go" reminds me of one of the more perceptive helmet cover graffiti I saw in Vietnam, this one on a young Maine grunt in Military Region I in 1966 or 1967: "Fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity."

TERENCE J. DALY
Incline Village, Nevada

James gang

To the editors:

Louis Menand ("James Family Values," December 18, 1995) misleadingly edits William James to a more contemporary taste when he portrays him as thinking there is "no imperative" to "square" our ideas "with every other idea we might once have found useful." James, on the contrary, insisted that "the most imperious claimant" in matters of truth is "consistency both with previous truth and novel fact." Moreover, philosophers, he pointed out, in contrast to "amateur dabblers in philosophy," must feel "the pragmatistic need of squaring truth with truth." (*Pragmatism*, pages 217, 295.)

Menand's account also oversimplifies when he says that James "insisted that pragmatism took no position on monism or pluralism." True, he thought monism had to be respected for "it has massive historic vindication" and psychological value, but he went on to say that "the pluralistic way agrees with the pragmatic temper best." (*Pragmatism*, page 278.) For autobiographical, psychological and intellectual reasons, and speaking for himself, rather than "officially as a pragmatist," James found the "strenuous life" of "healthy-minded" and "tough-minded" moralism and pluralism far more congenial than the "tender-minded" monistic idea of "a world already saved *in toto* anyhow." (Page 295.) Menand quotes approvingly James's premise (which I also accept) that "all 'homes' are in finite experience," but James prefaces the point by saying that it is true "for pluralistic pragmatism." (Page 260.)

At the end of *Pragmatism* James strongly suggests that his readers may well find "the type of pluralistic and moralistic religion" that he personally favors to be a "pragmatistic" religion that is "as good a religious synthesis as you are likely to find." (Page 301.) Pragmatism may logically take no position on monism or pluralism, but its founder's formulation of it certainly strongly favored the pluralist alternative.

CUSHING STROUT
Ithaca, New York

To the editors:

It is a bit disconcerting to find such a glaring and totally false statement in the very first paragraph of Louis Menand's review. He states that "Among his (Mr. James) holdings was the village of Syracuse, which he had purchased outright in 1824." This is balderdash, pure and simple.

The village of Syracuse was incorporated on April 13, 1825. Mr. James was a partner in a company called the Syracuse Company, along with Isaiah and John Townsend and a Mr. James McBride. It is true that the company owned a large parcel of real estate in the village, however, Mr. James nor the Syracuse Company nor anyone else for that matter ever owned the village of Syracuse, outright!

VINCENT NEMETI
Syracuse, New York

Irish nays

To the editors:

Robert Wright ("Irish Ayes," December 18, 1995) may well be correct that Western divorce is too easy, especially when children are involved. Nevertheless, the key point to Ireland's referendum was that divorce law did not belong in Ireland's constitution. Our own Constitution has endured so well mainly because its purpose is to restrain government power, not individual rights.

HUGO S. CUNNINGHAM
Boston, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Robert Wright cites a 1976 statistic that cases of fatal abuse were 100 times more likely for children not living with two natural parents, and uses this as evidence of the destructive effects of divorce. This argument confuses common cause with cause-and-effect. People who are evil enough to kill children are not generally the kind of people who have long-lasting marriages. But this does not prove that anyone would be better off if they were compelled, by law or societal pressure, to remain in their first marriage.

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"The failure of modern liberalism to deal seriously with complex moral issues" is a figment of Wright's imagination. A serious, engaged and important debate goes on as to when it is better, for everyone involved, for partners in a troubled marriage to stay together or to divorce and what their moral responsibilities are in this situation. It is not a sign of moral frivolity to decide that certain extreme solutions—in particular, the legal prohibition of divorce and remarriage—are not worth considering or debating.

ERNEST DAVIS
New York, New York

Fur world

To the editors:

Peter Beinart's article, "The Fur Flies" (December 18, 1995), about the so-called demise of the anti-fur campaign of animal rights activists confuses Greenpeace with PETA, the animal rights movement with the environmental movement, and slides back and between these two concepts in order to make unsubstantiated claims. Anti-fur is alive and well among animal rights activists and, according to statements from *Fur World*, June 12, 1995 and March 20, 1995 ("New York—the fur market here is eluding the 1994 season with a sigh. Some call it a disaster"), winning the battle.

Beinart's sympathy for the "guys who live in teepees," the trapper who has to a make living, overlooks the fact that fur is the most visible sign of inequality. As an activist who has stood for hours in front of fur stores in winter cold, I find it interesting to note that truckers and families in old, inexpensive cars gave us the "V"-for-victory sign. I would like to think that it was motivated by sympathy for the animals, but much of it was probably motivated by the resentment that they, too—like the trappers—work for a living but can't afford fur, a sign of wealth that is more visible than yachts, jewelry, glamorous vacations or expensive art. When you wear fur, you wear your money on your back and poor people know it.

ROBERTA KALECHOFSKY
Marblehead, Massachusetts

To the editors:

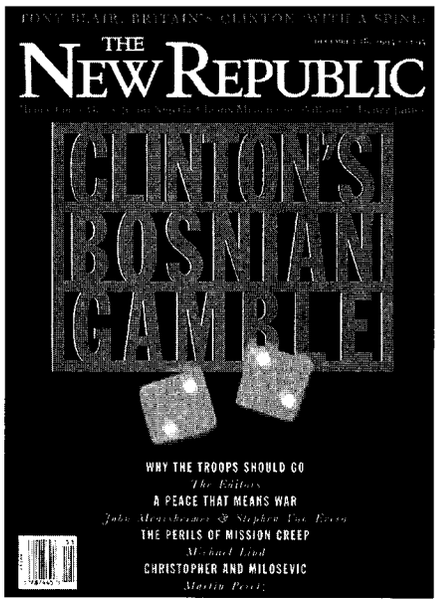
In "The Fur Flies" Peter Beinart fails to mention that trapping that does not deplete the resource actually helps the environment by providing a means for wild land to earn its keep while staying wild. Ban trapping and that wild land, whether a farmer's woodlot or a Canadian forest, becomes more vulnerable to the bulldozer and the chainsaw. Further, the trapper's ethnicity has no bearing on the matter.

LANDON LOCKETT
Austin, Texas

Road kill

To the editors:

Your December 18, 1995, notebook item predicting mass highway deaths in the wake of an increased speed limit was predictable, but still deserves reply. True, Americans could better handle higher speeds if our roads were as well maintained as their European counterparts and, more importantly, U.S. driver training were as thorough and comprehensive as Germany's. But a UC-Irvine study done for the AAA, not exactly the most speed-friendly organization, found that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overall traffic deaths have actually *decreased* since states were permitted to raise the speed limit in 1987, because more people were using the interstates (the safest roads we have). Also, I believe the "deadliest" stretch of interstate you refer to is I-84 in *Idaho*, not Montana, where the problem is not speed but high winds that have blown obscuring clouds of snow and loose dirt across the road at inopportune times.

DAN CASE
Clarence, New York

Kristolized

To the editors:

I register this footnote without any aim of repudiating Paul Starr's distinctly insightful review of Irving Kristol's book, *Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea* ("Nothing Neo," December 4, 1995). Yet, I believe that there is more than meets Mr. Starr's eye.

I submit that neoconservatism, embraced by Jewish intellectuals in particular, is understood primarily by and through a psychological lens, with politics, social policy and economics, respectively, subordinate. What then, has driven Kristol and his ilk? "Jewish" neurosis: a mild, emotional, cultural disorder affecting personality; and which is manifest by fear and anxiety.

Trotskyist, liberal anticommunist and finally conservative antiliberal, Mr. Kristol cannot avert the perception of intellectual instability. He is a nonobservant Jew with a deep and genuine affinity for Judaism. Still, is he in the grip of paranoia in thinking that Jewish "survival" in the U.S. depends upon renouncing liberalism ("Jews are liberals"), in order to withstand a perceived (albeit nonexistent) American-Christian backlash?

Why, in 1995, in the nation where law and order is most practiced and respected, would a Jew entertain the idea that if Christian fundamentalism is becoming more ascendant then those of the Jewish faith will have to adapt and accept a Christian redefinition of American public life? More objectively put, is the sound divide between secular state and church about to vanish? How many Jews feel comfortable with Pat Robertson? Kristol's exhortations to the contrary, it is dubious that Jews will abandon liberalism.

I have heard tell that in his student days, Trotskyite Kristol would assemble a small group in his living room after school and extol the virtues of socialism. Overhearing the argumentation, his mother would shake her head and retort "smart ... smart ... stupid!" In a way, re: Irving Kristol, little has changed since those occasions, fifty-six years ago.

ELLIOTT A. COHEN
New York, New York

Alleged individual

To the editors:

It is time THE NEW REPUBLIC comes clean on the true identities of this incomparably prolific alleged individual, Michael Lind. "Michael Lind" is everywhere, proliferating in TNR, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Dissent*, *The National Interest*, *Foreign Affairs*, even a sonnet in *Sparrow 62, The Yearbook of the Sonnet*, plus praise in poetry circles for an epic Homeric poem on the Alamo and book-trade gossip of a six-figure advance for a first novel by this "Michael Lind." Is "Michael Lind" an anagram for the initials of twenty different writers? Or is he really just a senior editor at THE NEW REPUBLIC?

EDWARD T. CHASE
New York, New York

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FROM WASHINGTON

Star search

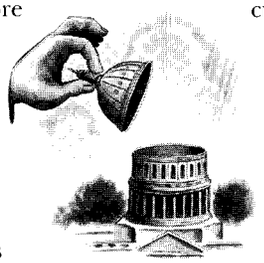
Have you noticed the excess of talented and productive American workers? Senator Alan Simpson has, and he's not going to take it lying down. Witness the immigration bill he's sponsoring. Under current law, 140,000 highly skilled workers per year can get permanent visas as "employer-sponsored" immigrants, often recruited by high-tech companies. Simpson's bill would lower that ceiling to 90,000 and take various other measures to stem the rising tide of proficiency before it reaches dangerous levels.

Simpson's bill goes well beyond high-skill workers. It would cut the total immigration level of 800,000 per year by at least 200,000. Like the House's big immigration bill, it is an expression of growing, and increasingly bipartisan, qualms about immigration in general. These qualms aren't wholly irrational. They are about half irrational and half a plausible, if debatable, attempt to address real economic and cultural problems. But the same can't be said of Simpson's focus on high-skill immigrants. This part of his bill combines all the confusion of standard immigration reform arguments with none of their legitimacy. It wouldn't ameliorate such problems as growing income inequality and cultural balkanization; in fact, it would make them worse. To the extent that immigration reform has a coherent purpose, Simpson's crusade against talent would tend to defeat it.

The most common flaw in anti-immigration arguments is the idea that one worker's fortune is another worker's misfortune. To hear some immigration reformers talk, you'd think our economy has a fixed number of jobs or a fixed payroll, so that every incoming worker either puts one native-born worker out of work or lowers average wages. But of course if that were true—if the whole pie were really fixed in size—then *any* form of population growth would be bad news. The past two centuries would have been a story of ever-plunging per-capita income. That the opposite has happened suggests that adding productive workers to an economy can create a demand for even more workers. After all, workers don't just make money—they spend it.

The more sophisticated arguments for immigration reform concede the possibility that all will be well in the long run but dwell on immediate dislocation: in the short term, at least, immigrants who work for cheap can raise unemployment or lower wages; and in an age of rising income inequality, driving low wages lower, even if only temporarily, is intolerable. When a housepainter getting $6 an hour is replaced by an immigrant getting $3, it isn't enough to tell him or her about the eventual benefits of a growing labor pool.

Well, maybe not. But we're not talking about housepainters right now. Today's question is: How devastating is the effect of immigration on more highly skilled workers? Consider, for example, the horror stories being circulated by the anti-immigration forces: some company replaces dozens of native-born computer programmers making $50,000 or $60,000 with programmers from India or the Philippines who make $25,000 or $30,000. Now, as it happens, real-life stories this dramatic almost invariably come from the "H-1B" program for temporary visas—to meet temporary skill shortages—not from the permanent-visa program that Simpson wants to cap at 90,000 workers. Moreover, these stories almost invariably involve violations of the law as it already stands. The "body shops" that broker these workers at wages well below market levels have been fined as much as $1 million. Still, let's suppose that Simpson's cap on permanent visas really did protect some native-born computer programmers from such a plight. What exactly would have been accomplished?



Almost any programmer—or any other kind of engineer—making $50,000 or $60,000 can find another job, if at a salary cut. And any worker making $50,000 or $60,000, given a spouse working even part time, has a household income in the upper reaches of the national scale to begin with. I'm not advocating lowering such salaries as the preferred approach to reducing income inequality; I'm saying that the downside of high-skill immigration falls short of calamity. And look at the upside. An immigrant making $30,000 a year spends a lot more money than an immigrant painting houses for $3 an hour. He or she eats out, buys a car, has it repaired, maybe even buys a home. (Time to rehire that native-born housepainter!)

This is no trivial matter. In an age when some kinds of manual labor are migrating to low-wage foreign assembly lines, one kind that can't migrate is the kind that provides inherently local services—carpentry, auto repair, lawn care. And such services are consumed in bulk by highly skilled, relatively affluent workers. Thus, high-skill immigrants may doubly serve the cause of income equalization, bidding down high wages and bidding up low ones. And income inequality is supposedly high on the list of concerns for immigration reformers.

Also high on that list is rampant multiculturalism. Reformers worry about large pockets of Hispanics or Asians clinging to their native tongue and resisting assimilation. But if this is the problem, well-educated immigrants are part of the solution. They are more likely to speak English and embrace American culture. They won't singlehandedly unify the nation, but they can help create an America in which a sizable fraction of all ethnic and religious groups is affluent and culturally integrated. That's better than no fraction.

The backlash against skilled immigrants is especially perverse coming, as it does, in an age when high-skill jobs are growing more exportable. American companies are starting to contract out software design and other engineering projects to relatively low-wage workers abroad. Would we rather these workers spent their paychecks overseas or here?

By rational analysis, high-skill immigrants would count as a windfall for America. They arrive with much of their secondary education, and often their college education, paid for by foreigners, yet America reaps the rewards. Simpson's failure to see this was vividly evident in an early version of his bill. It required foreigners who attend American colleges to go abroad for three years before working in the U.S. Thus, after American professors, and sometimes American taxpayers, had invested in the brains of visitors, the payoff would accrue abroad. Simpson dropped this provision after its absurdity was explained to him. But the fact that he supported it even briefly makes you wonder about the caliber of thought behind immigration reform in general.

There is one sound argument against high-skill immigration. Whatever the benefits to America, it siphons off precious talent from developing nations. This argument should resonate with all politicians willing to look beyond America's problems to the graver ones facing other nations. Don't expect to hear much about it.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JANUARY 22, 1996

OVER THE HILL

There's been an awful lot made of the number of senators and congressmen who have stepped to the microphone and announced they are retiring. That's not surprising. The numbers are astonishing, unprecedented in the last 100 years. Thirty-three representatives will leave voluntarily at the end of this term. Thirteen senators have either left office or announced their retirement this year, the most since 1896. The exodus includes some of the more venerated public figures of the era—senators like Bill Bradley and Sam Nunn, Nancy Kassebaum and Mark Hatfield. It includes Democrats who are clearly frustrated by being in the minority, but it also includes figures who are still big players such as Kweisi Mfume, the former head of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Bob Walker, an early Newtoid once known for late-night C-SPAN tirades and now a House leader.

There is an irksome quality to the way Washington has, as they say at Renaissance weekend, been working through this loss. Yes, the loss of many of these members, particularly centrists like Bradley, is a blow to the Senate. There are not enough people who were able to vote for Contra aid in the '80s *and* for protecting federal aid to the poor in the '90s. But none of them is indispensable. What's more, official Washington has hailed these retirees as deserving veterans rather than rebuked them as quitters. No doubt many of them are tired. Nunn, for one, has been in the Senate almost twenty-four years. But fatigue is not an excuse, for them or the rest of us. These centrists, it seems to us, have a duty to their country that goes beyond their personal needs. The Democrats, we hope, feel a twinge of guilt about leaving their party in the lurch to the left.

Washington, fond as it is of buzzwords, has blamed the exodus on a loss of "civility." Well, no doubt the Congress is a less pleasant place than it once was. The clubby atmosphere of days gone by, when everyone was friends after 5:00, vanished as courtly types like Bob Michel were replaced by Newt Gingrich. But many of those who lament the loss of civility were hardly Brian Lamb wannabes themselves—Pat Schroeder and Alan Simpson were less than diplomatic during the Anita Hill and Robert Bork fights. Besides, civility is an overrated quality. Washington disdains those like Democratic Whip David Bonior or the House freshmen, legislators who have the temerity to fight for what they believe in. But their energy is vital. Without them the House and Senate would be as dull as a David Broder column. Capitol Hill would be a miasma of good feeling but little accomplishment.

It's also vexing that only a few departing figures have soaked up Washington's attention. Besides the Bradleys and Nunns, senators who became famous for their Hamlet routines every four years, it's worth remembering that a quieter but often more productive coterie will be quitting. David Pryor, the Arkansas senator, is barely known nationally but his work in protecting consumers from fraud, particularly from the health care industry, is the best the Senate has to offer. Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin was a voice of Republican sanity. And even such old reptiles as Mississippi's Sonny Montgomery will be missed. The boll weevil is as responsible as anyone for reviving the G.I. bill—an exercise of government beneficence at its best.

One situation that should not go uncorrected amid this exodus is the growth of congressional pensions. Unlike the vast majority of Americans who contribute to self-financed contribution plans like the ubiquitous 401(k), the members of Congress will collect guaranteed pensions. Montgomery himself will be eligible to collect $106,880 a year, according to the National Taxpayers Union. Pat Schroeder, 55, can plan on raking in $74,915, even though she's sure to earn big bucks during a second career. In Washington, which has among the highest incomes in the country, there's a tendency to view these pension questions as churlish, petty—the stuff of right-wing talk radio and lefty Ralph Nader press conferences. But it is not unimportant. The gap between the lavish life of the political class and the rest of the country is straining the bonds of American citizenship. Besides, it is simply good manners for the Congress to do something about their own pensions at a time when they plan to end Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Cutting their own pay would be a classy note on which to bid the Capitol a fond farewell. But don't hold your breath. •

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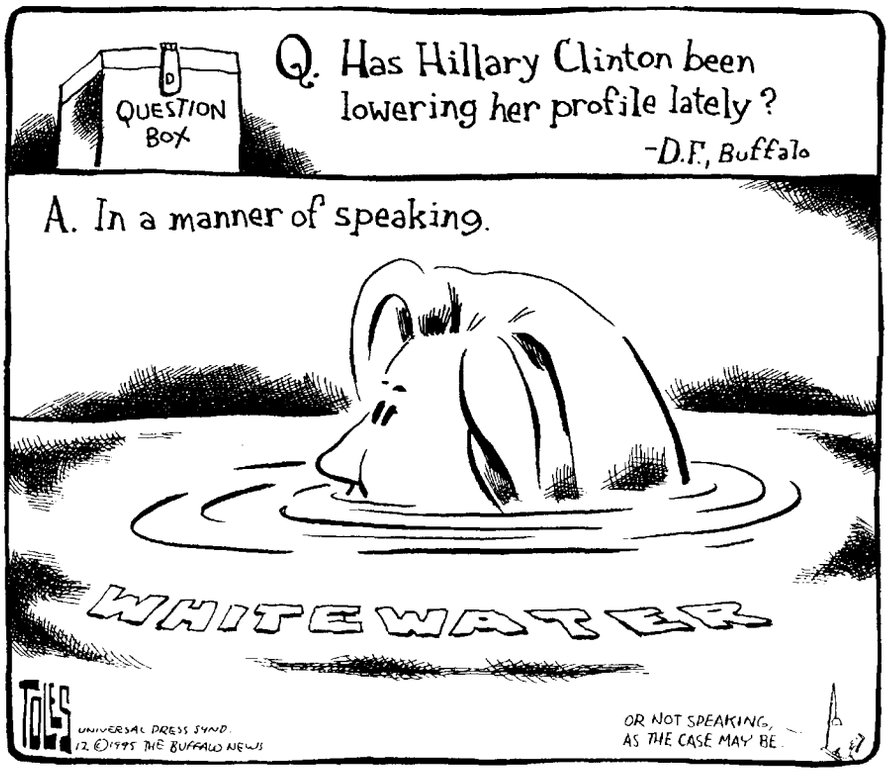
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: The cash-strapped District of Columbia police force will put used tires donated from the U.S. Park Police and the U.S. Capitol Police on its patrol cars.... Three Port Arthur, Texas, men were injured after attempting to rescue a wheelchair-bound neighbor, who, they later learned, had died more than a year ago.... An abandoned 12-year-old boy who asked for welfare help in Utah turned out to be a 25-year-old woman who had pulled similar scams in at least ten other states.... TV star Roseanne complained that she hasn't been invited to the White House, saying, "I feel as though I elected Bill Clinton." ... Hillary Clinton said she and her husband "feel a little out of it" when they attend daughter Chelsea's parties "because nobody pays any attention to us and nobody talks to us."


QUESTION BOX
Q. Has Hillary Clinton been lowering her profile lately?
-D.F., Buffalo
A. In a manner of speaking.
WHITEWATER
TOLES
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYND.
12 ©1995 THE BUFFALO NEWS
OR NOT SPEAKING, AS THE CASE MAY BE.

MISSION CREEP CREEPS: The United States has been assigned control of the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, where Serb forces committed the mass murder of Bosnians last summer and near which thousands of bodies still lie in shallow mass graves. American troops in the Balkans are not a conquering force, but peacekeepers. Still, the need to document the crime at Srebrenica remains—and thus far, the Serbs have not allowed civilian international authorities access to the area. Only the army has the muscle to enter and remain there long enough to secure the evidence and account for the missing. But, according to the January 3 *Washington Post*, U.S. troops as yet have no "guidance" from Washington about going into Srebrenica. What they, and their superiors, do have is a fear of "mission creep"—the notion, essentially, that if the army presses the issue of war crimes, it will get into a fight with the Serbs. The United States is in Bosnia to establish and protect the peace. But there will be no peace without a measure of justice. And there will be no justice unless the guilty are held accountable. Rather than threatening army safety, a courageous entry into Srebrenica would help ensure that America's Bosnia enterprise does not end up as a mission without meaning.

GINGRINCH: There is one sure way to test the House Speaker's devotion to Boys Town and Red Cross, to a world where private citizens stuff the void that government once filled with gifts of cash, food and clothing. It's called the Combined Federal Campaign, a kind of yearly holiday drive where House and Senate leaders and agency heads donate money to a circulated list of charities and urge their staffs to do the same. Well, so far, Gingrich has failed the test. The Speaker forgot about the campaign this year until House Democratic Caucus Chairman Vic Fazio lambasted him on the House floor. His amnesia was aided by Republican John Mica, who had been lobbying to purge the list of unworthy causes like the Sierra Club. Finally Gingrich launched the drive, one month late. But instead of the usual friendly, bipartisan greeting, he sent the yuletidings out on his own letterhead, reminding people that the holiday season is a time "to reflect on the needs of others." Merry retroactive Christmas, everyone.

OH, WELL...:

New Forecast May Aid Budget Talks

—*The Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1995.

New Forecast Dims Budget Deal Hopes

—*The Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1995.

(Thanks to Jerry Goren of Los Angeles, California, and Stuart Anderson of Upland, California.)

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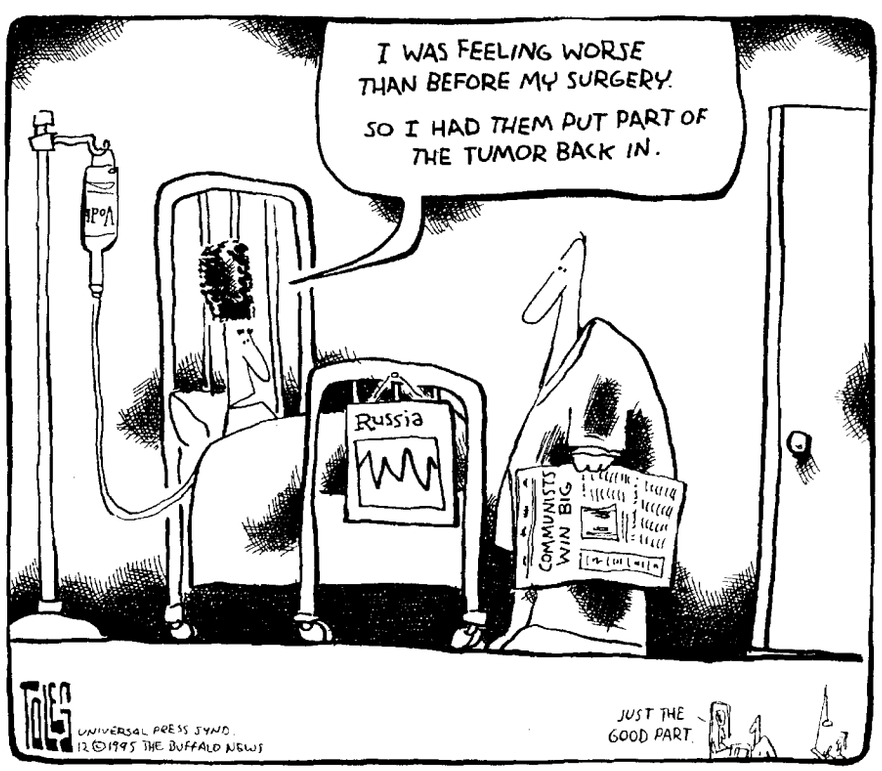
DEATH TOLL: More casualties of the Republican Revolution: the Associated Press reports that the fifty-six people executed last year was the highest total since since 1957. As recently as 1991 the number was just fourteen. The toll is likely to continue rising. Seizing on public alarm over violent crime, Congress is pressing for strict new limits on death row appeals and has gutted funding for legal services to the poor, while prosecutors and state legislatures are greasing the skids to the chair. The worst offenders are still in the South (Texas has carried out a third of the nation's 313 executions since the Supreme Court reinstated the practice in 1976), but the brutality is proving contagious—thanks in part to new GOP governors and death penalty cheerleaders like New York's George Pataki and Connecticut's John Rowland. Down South, punishments are getting more regressive even in non-capital cases. In the past year, chain gangs have marched again in Alabama, and state legislatures in Tennessee and Arkansas have considered bills allowing caning on courthouse steps and public hanging. Welcome to the Third Wave!


I WAS FEELING WORSE THAN BEFORE MY SURGERY.
SO I HAD THEM PUT PART OF THE TUMOR BACK IN.
Russia
COMMUNISTS WIN BIG
JUST THE GOOD PART.
TOLES
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYND.
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GRIDIRON BARS: There has been plenty of hoopla about the Northwestern University football team's ascent to nearly the top of the national rankings, its participation in the granddaddy of college sports events, the Rose Bowl, and its commitment to recruiting true scholar-athletes. But Northwestern's accomplishment seems even more laudable when compared to college football's newly crowned national champions, the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers. In contrast to Northwestern's squeaky-clean scholar-athletes, Nebraska's team roster looks more like a police lineup. Three Nebraska players have pleaded no contest to misdemeanor charges and are currently on probation. One of them, star running back Lawrence Phillips, physically assaulted his former girlfriend and dragged her—by her hair—down three flights of stairs. Defensive tackle Christian Peter was sentenced to probation for a 1993 sexual assault case. And three other Cornhuskers are currently involved in legal battles. Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne initially suspended Phillips from the team in September but reinstated him in late October, saying that Phillips "needs football" in his time of crisis. It would be more accurate to say that Osborne needed Phillips to lead his team into the championship-crowning Fiesta Bowl, worth $8 million dollars in cash, and much more in national exposure.

HOME NEWS: Observant readers will notice that, with this issue, Michael Kinsley's name has been moved from the list of senior editors to the contributing editor category. Some of you may already know that he is moving from Washington, D.C., to Washington state to put out a "virtual magazine" in cyberspace for Microsoft. Of course, we wish him well, very well. But we deeply regret his leaving, consoled though we are that he will write for us from time to time. Kinsley came to TNR in 1976 as managing editor in the middle of his senior year at the Harvard Law School. Shortly after, he became editor. He gave up the editorship when he took over the TRB column, giving it an intellectual rigor and velocity—and humor—it had never had before. Kinsley left the magazine twice: once, for two weeks, in a dispute with the editor-in-chief over an article; the second time to become editor of *Harper's*, from which post he quickly returned. Michael Kinsley took THE NEW REPUBLIC out of the doldrums and made it again tense, insolent and relevant. The cultural and political history of the last two decades will record that accomplishment. With this issue, Fouad Ajami also joins our roster of contributing editors. Ajami makes frequent, memorable appearances in our pages. Professor of Middle Eastern history at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and an analyst of Arab and Islamic affairs and of foreign policy, generally, for CBS News, he is the author of *The Arab Predicament* and other authoritative texts. Certainly few academics in our time have affected public discussion of international issues as brilliantly as he has. •

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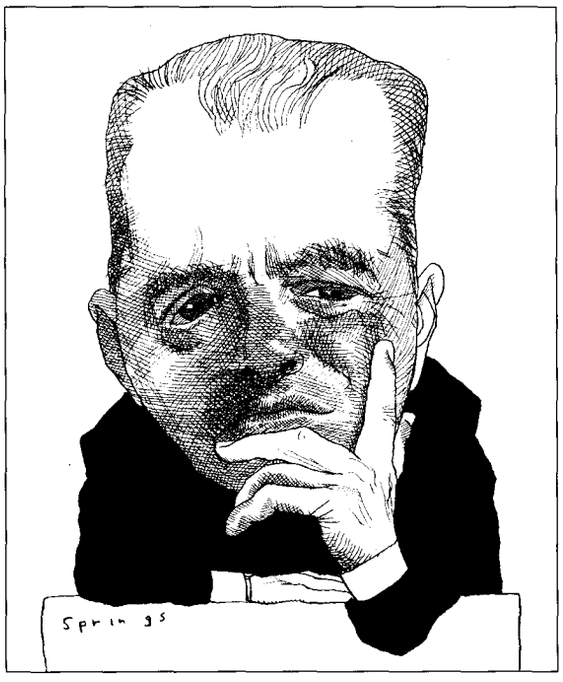
Nixon's inaccuracies.

NOT THE ONE

By Fred Barnes

The most riveting episode in *Nixon*, the highly touted Oliver Stone film, involves a 1968 television appearance by Richard Nixon before a studio audience assembled by his presidential campaign staff. The event is supposed to be choreographed, but a black man in the audience brazenly accuses Nixon of smearing people as Communists, dividing America and hiding his real agenda. "When are you going to take the mask off and show us who you really are?" the man demands, advancing toward Nixon. Momentarily flustered, Nixon quickly regains his composure. And in a dazzling response, he says he's seeking common ground, just as Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln did. Then, he spots a young girl in the audience with a sign saying "BRING US TOGETHER." He asks the girl to hold up the sign, and he appropriates the idea. "Bring us together—that is what I want, and that is what the great silent majority of Americans want!"



ANTHONY HOPKINS BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This might have been one of the most memorable moments in the history of electoral politics, overshadowing William Jennings Bryan's "cross of gold" speech, Reagan's deft defense against Jimmy Carter ("There you go again") and Lloyd Bentsen's putdown of Dan Quayle. Except it never happened. By itself, this isn't enough to dismiss the scene as spurious. After all, Stone tells viewers in a prologue that "events and characters have been condensed and some scenes among protagonists have been conjectured." And in an annotated screenplay published by Stone to enhance the film's credibility, the episode is characterized as "a composite of many of Nixon's appearances during the 1968 campaign." The trouble is these caveats scarcely apply in this instance. The episode is simply manufactured, ahistorical, dishonest—and so is much of the film.

It's one thing for Stone to create imaginary events in which a public figure participates. To a great extent, that's what docudramas consist of. Thus, while scenes of Nixon's private life with his wife, Pat, have drawn understandable protests from Nixon's daughters, they're within bounds. So are scenes of Nixon alone, sloshing down drink after drink and listening compulsively to the tapes that doomed his presidency. And so are scenes of Nixon's strange relationship with his mother, even one in which Nixon as a boy asks her to treat him as a "faithful dog." These may not ring true—to me, they don't—but Stone is free to speculate about Nixon's private affairs.

He's not entitled to rewrite history. Stone himself says so. "There is no intention here to revise history," he writes in a note on the first page of the screenplay. Yet that's exactly what he does in the Nixon TV episode and in other scenes. The television appearances were staged events, watched by millions. They were an essential part of Nixon's general election strategy. The audiences were carefully screened and largely docile. Nixon got a few tough questions—his staff wanted some sharp queries in hopes that Nixon's responses would be more forceful—but there was no angry confrontation like the one Stone depicts. What Stone has done is falsify an historic event. It's like doing a movie bio of Lincoln and changing the words of the Gettysburg Address.

The details are wrong, too. The little girl with the sign did show up in the 1968 campaign, but not at a TV appearance. She was spotted by the Nixon entourage standing along the road on the last day of the campaign. Her appeal to "bring us together" became a slogan of the early days of the Nixon presidency, not the Nixon campaign. And "silent majority" wasn't a term used by Nixon in 1968 either. It didn't crop up in a Nixon speech until 1969, when Nixon faced rising protests over his refusal to withdraw all American forces from Vietnam. Stone has Nixon assert he has "big mo" in the 1968 campaign, though this phrase didn't pop up until George Bush's presidential run in 1980. He has Nixon deciding to run for the presidency in 1968 only after President Johnson withdraws from the race after the New Hampshire primary. By this time, Nixon had been campaigning for more than a year and had won the New Hampshire primary on the Republican side. In a scene in which Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller chat, the two are presented as political rivals. They were allies at the time. In another episode set in January 1973, Nixon is driven from the podium by snarling reporters after

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he announces a ceasefire in Vietnam. Rude and accusatory as White House correspondents are, they never acted like this. The scene ends with Nixon shoving his press secretary, Ron Ziegler, back toward the press. The Ziegler incident is famous, only it happened seven months later—Stone notes this in the annotated screenplay—and in a completely different context.

The ironic thing about *Nixon* is that the person who authoritatively disproves the movie is Nixon himself. He appears toward the end in a news clip of his departure from the White House in 1974 after resigning. As columnist Robert Novak has noted, Nixon hardly looks upbeat, but he does appear to be proud, composed, even a bit jaunty. Now, this was presumably the worst day in Nixon's life. But he looked better than Anthony Hopkins did, portraying Nixon as lugubrious and put upon and awkward twenty years previously. Obviously there's a false note here. It doesn't come from Nixon.

FRED BARNES is executive editor of *The Weekly Standard.*

Boston liberals meet Arafat.

GLOBAL VISION

By Martin Peretz

"Shocked! Shocked!" Captain Renault exclaimed when he came face to face with illegal gambling in Vichy-run Morocco. By now, this memorable line of feigned surprise, uttered by Claude Rains in *Casablanca,* has become a universal cliché for what, in fact, no longer shocks at all. Except, of course, when it seems to stun those who have made a fetish of the innocence and idealism of the truly bloodthirsty and cynical. No respectable daily publication in the U.S. has painted a more consistently flattering portrait of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a more consistently unflattering portrait of Israel than *The Boston Globe.* So, to be consistent, the paper was virtually compelled to become a cheerleader for the ascendance to on-the-ground power of PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. But, even for the editorialists at the *Globe,* there are some limits to tolerance of Arafat's offenses. The Fatah Hawks, his thug militia, can kill ordinary men and women with impunity. But just let one of them touch a newspaperman!

Arafat crossed this line when the head of his political police, an accomplished terrorist named Jibril Rajoub, imprisoned Maher al-Alami, editor of *Al-Quds,* the most popular Palestinian newspaper. The reason? The *Globe* got it only partly right. According to its version, a story about Arafat's meeting with the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem was put in *Al-Quds*'s back pages when the chairman's handlers thought the report deserved front-page treatment. This incarceration establishes a new criminal standard for punishment. The *Globe* was not only surprised. It was also "desolat[ed]." That's because it believed its own blather about the Palestinian "hunger for [an] . . . open society," for which the clearest evidence are photographs of mere tots brandishing rifles in the streets of the West Bank.

The part of the al-Alami story the editorial page editors did not tell and the part that so excited the Palestinians was that Patriarch Diodoros I had, in his session with Arafat, compared the Chairman to Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the seventh-century Muslim conqueror, which is to say, the liberator of Jerusalem. The patriarch fawned over Arafat because Palestinian Christians fear for their future under Muslim rule, and fawning is the preferred form of defensive diplomacy in the Arab Middle East. Over the last decades, Christian Arabs have been fleeing the Holy Land by the tens of thousands, grasping finally that Palestinian nationalism is just another version of Muslim piety. Christians were in the vanguard of almost every Arab nationalism and of pan-Arabism precisely to prevent such an outcome. In fact, the more virulent expressions of secular Arab nationalism were often the creations of Christians fearful of Muslim dominance. They felt they could keep the tiger at bay by feeding him. And they fed him with a new and toxic diet, Germanic ideas about *volk* and anti-Semitism. The secular, all-embracing doctrine of nationalism was to make citizens of them all, Muslims and Christians alike. But all to no avail, everywhere.

The rise of Palestinian nationalism augured the departure of Palestinian Christians, a result not anticipated by the man who first articulated its ideology and did a good deal of the feeding himself, a half-learned Christian pedant called George Antonius. (His weird story is now being written by Fouad Ajami.) Even Bethlehem, where Jesus was born and which was always a Christian city, is now down to a Christian population of 35 percent. A powerful recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* by André Aciman tells us why. The Holy Land Christians know the bitter history of Christians in neighboring Egypt, in adjoining Lebanon and in not-so-remote Iraq (where there were once 2 million faithful of the Assyrian Church, either murdered or, as Pat Moynihan once pointed out, with lucky descendents in Chicago). So they move on, when they still can, to Canada or Australia, where they will deny the cruelties that drove them out. But some cannot go and will stay, hoping against fear. Of course, Arafat knows of this fear—how could he not?—but does nothing to assuage it. Specially for Christmas, he had his minions drape his massive visage, Mao-style, over Manger Square.

The Christians of Jerusalem are in a special predicament. For years they assumed that the entire city would remain under Israeli sovereignty. So they made their

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accommodations and vented their grievances. During the Shamir government Jewish ultras gave them plenty to be aggrieved about. But there was no doubt then about Jewish resolve on the ultimate status of Jerusalem. Now, however, that Shimon Peres seems to have put just about every option on the table many Palestinians believe they will get some sovereign political foothold in Israel's capital. So, in recent months, several thousand of Jerusalem's Christians—and not just Christians—have exercised the option all Arabs of Jerusalem have had for decades. Fearful of being trapped in Arafat's state, they have become citizens of Israel.

The irony is that, just as the will-do-anything-and-everything doves are contemplating just that over Jerusalem, much of the rest of the world seems ready to accept sovereign Jewish title. The present mayor, Ehud Olmert, has just returned from Sao Paulo, Montevideo and Buenos Aires, where the mayors of these cities (and the presidents of the countries they are in) joined in celebrations of Jerusalem's trimillennium. Observing 3,000 years since a tiny town was made "the city of the great king" (the king here was God, not David), as Jerusalem is called in Psalm 48:3, is a political act. That this is happening in Catholic countries is especially notable. In 1947, the price of Latin support for the Partition Plan for Palestine was internationalization of the whole city. Now even the Vatican, not an institution exactly in step with world realities, has given up the ghost of this idea and accepted—with little grace, it is true—the political facts as they are.

There is an important principle involved here. Large clusters of people of every religion and of almost every nation are minorities somewhere. Many of them would wish it otherwise. That's what secession and irredentism are all about. But the cartography of politics is not the cartography of happiness. Muslim Arabs are a minority in Jerusalem, and they've been that for centuries. It's not what they'd like it to be. Still, their fate is much preferable to that of Christian minorities in the world of Islam—or, as it happens, of Islamic minorities, sectarian or ethnic, in that same world. Think of the Shi'a under Sunni rule or the Sunnis under Shi'a rule or of the Kurds and Berbers, who are not Arabs, which is all you need to know. And no Arab journalist will go to jail in a Jerusalem under Israeli rule for failing to put on his front page a fawning story about Shimon Peres.

The *Globe* calls Arafat's most recent attempt to bully the Palestinian press mere "pettiness," saying also that it "belies earlier hopes and promises." But from Arafat's perspective it was not petty at all. He does not fear the Christians; he fears the Islamic extremists. The analogy to Arafat with the Islamic conqueror of Jerusalem, coming as it does from the head of the oldest Christian communion in the land, is valuable coinage, the kind of minority tribute he can muster against his Muslim adversaries who doubt his devotion. As for what this bullying belies, it belies nothing. The *Globe* contrasts the Palestinians' expectations for themselves with the brutal ways of their neighbors: "Too many Palestinians know about the Lebanese journalist who had his hand dipped in a vat of acid for writing something displeasing to Syrian ruler Hafez Assad." This is simply fatuous. The *Globe* may not remember that a Palestinian cartoonist, Ali Naji al-Adhami, was murdered, according to Scotland Yard, by terrorists from Arafat's own Fatah wing of the PLO in the summer of 1987. And what was his crime? He had been insolent to Arafat. There were other such cases during the seven telltale years of the Palestinian mini-state in Lebanon.

But all one need do to see the future is to think back to the day before yesterday. A pro-Jordanian newspaper in the West Bank, *An-Nahar*, was banned by the Palestinian Authority until its publisher, Othman Hallaq, recanted his views and tamed his daily to PLO discipline. And then there is the less-known episode of a new publication in the new Palestine, *Abna al Balad*, or "Sons of the Land." It was founded by Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, a descendant of one of the two great warring Arab clans in old Palestine—the one that lost to the Husseinis, from which swaddling emerged Haj-Amin Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem and a Nazi collaborator. (From this line also descends Yasir Arafat and the forgotten hope of the moderates, Faisal Husseini.) Nashashibi had gone into exile after Israel took over. But, with the Israelis leaving, he came back to try his luck in the new order. He and his magazine were hounded and harassed in ways common to the region; both are now gone. Mr. Alami was lucky. He was released after a week, not exactly contrite but chastened. Arafat had made his point. Cheer now, if you wish. But Palestine will, on any reasonable index of freedom, be much like those other great liberated areas of our time: Algeria, Vietnam, China, North Korea, Iran. The disenchantment has already begun—even in *The Boston Globe*. •

The Library of Congress's cowardice.

THE BIG MOUSE

By Todd Gitlin

Three times in a single month, the Library of Congress has chosen suppression over exhibition, silencing over debate. First, accused of taking too soft a line on the founding father of psychoanalysis, it postponed a show devoted to Freud and his legacy, claiming financial pressures. Then, two weeks ago, Library officials dismantled a show on the architecture of slave quarters, "Back of the Big House: The Cultural Landscape of the Plantation," that had already been installed and was about to open. The reason? A

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A Recipe for School Reform

A couple of weeks ago, the *New York Times* food section ran an article about a French bread that you can make with a food processor (November 22, 1995). The article claimed that the baguette was as delicious as the kind you buy in a good bakery. I was skeptical. I have made bread for my family and friends for a number of years, and I know that a good French loaf is a real accomplishment. I had no trouble believing that the bread would be quick and easy. But delicious? Nevertheless, I tried the recipe for Thanksgiving. It was terrific!

Van Over knew that he needed more than an appealing idea.

Though making the bread was as painless as the article said, the process by which Charles van Over, a chef and restaurateur, arrived at the recipe was anything but simple. Van Over experimented over a period of several *years* in order to get a bread with the best possible texture, flavor, and crust—and a recipe that could be made with predictable results by other cooks. It occurred to me as I read the article that there might be some lessons for school reformers in van Over's systematic efforts to perfect his recipe for a food processor baguette.

Van Over thought his first batch of bread was pretty good—but not good enough. So he went on working and reworking the recipe and playing with the different variables in the recipe. He experimented with different flours, types of yeast, water temperatures, and rising times. In the course of this experimentation, he discovered that chlorinated water impeded the growth of the yeast, so he began using spring water. Another chef suggested that he use the metal blade of the food processor instead of the plastic one. He did and liked the result, so that, too, became part of his recipe.

In the end, van Over had a bread that resembled its excellent prototype. This was quite an accomplishment. But even more impressive is the fact that ordinary people can make this bread in ordinary kitchens, with a one-minute mixing time, and be sure of getting good results. Van Over continues to "refine his techniques [but] he now believes he has come close to the near-ideal combination of the best quality with the least effort."

What would have happened if van Over had proceeded like some school reformers instead of like a baker?

He might have rejected the idea of adapting French bread for a food processor in the first place. Too traditional. Not innovative enough. And not American, anyway. Never mind the fact that French people have been enjoying it for years, and it is admired as a standard all over the world.

If he had gone ahead, it's unlikely that he would have tried to get exact ingredients and procedures—many school reformers stop when they have a general idea of what they want. People would have implemented this general idea in all kinds of ways, and most of them would have been disappointed with the results. ("*This* is French bread?") So they would soon have abandoned van Over's idea and started looking for the next new fad in baking.

But van Over knew that he needed more than an appealing idea with some general guidelines about ingredients and proportions. So he tested results and refined procedures until he had created a recipe that was excellent and certain to succeed. If this were school reform instead of cooking, would he get applause for developing a reliable way of getting children to understand a particular idea? I don't think so. He'd be more likely to hear, "It's OK for him, but our situation is different," and complaints that his detailed procedures stifled creativity.

I wish I could say this is an exaggeration but it's not. Many school reformers would not consider working for years to figure out every detail of their system and trying it a thousand times to make sure it would work for everybody. (Often, they have no proof that it will work for anybody.) And if they did subject their idea to the van Over method, it would probably be rejected because the procedures they developed would be considered too rigid.

We could laugh about the absurdity of these ideas if their results were not tragic. In cooking, as in medicine and pharmacology and every branch of pure and applied science, innovators understand that they must perfect a procedure before going public with it—and the people who use a new procedure feel obliged to follow it exactly because it is far superior to the "creative" ideas they can come up with on the spur of the moment. This is not an attack on *all* school reformers. Fortunately some are working carefully, trying out their ideas, and getting them right before recommending them for general use. They must be distinguished from those—unfortunately many—who do not follow this path.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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number of employees, mainly African Americans, found it offensive. If this weren't enough, the Library also removed four anti-lynching cartoons of the '30s and '40s from a current exhibit of graphics. These were "some rather difficult images," Jill Brett, the Library's public affairs officer, told me.

Like all public institutions, the Library is feeling the financial pinch. Not wanting trouble, it doesn't want nasty truth. The result is a severe and chronic cramp in public knowledge. Profiles in cowardice are becoming more and more conspicuous in the cultural landscape of official Washington. Everyone knows how the Smithsonian, under pressure, gutted the planned exhibit on the dropping of the atomic bombs. After that exercise in turning a blind eye, the Smithsonian postponed serious consideration of a show on the Vietnam War until the turn of the century; the earliest it might appear is the year 2002. The pattern is plain: when symbols inspire protest, don't welcome debate, just run for cover. In the world of the gatekeepers, fear speaks louder than speech.

"Back of the Big House" was the work of Professor John Michael Vlach, who teaches American studies and anthropology at The George Washington University. Vlach has written seven books on African American life and folklore and belongs to a generation of social historians who have made it their business to recover a history hitherto obscured. In his 1993 book, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, Vlach used the Library of Congress's own photo archive to reveal the hidden workings of the majestic plantation houses that have falsely been taken to symbolize Southern culture. The Library of Congress then invited Vlach to mount an exhibition—not simply to include it between other stops in its travels, as Librarian of Congress James H. Billington claimed in an official statement.

Professor Vlach has had to guess about the precise objections to the exhibit, since no one at the Library has communicated a word to him. Those in charge, he says, simply "disappeared" the exhibition overnight. "If you look at the photos," Vlach told me, "there's nothing prettied up about them. They show slave quarters and work-related sites, with quotes from occupants, where we could find pictures of them. They show the work done in these quarters and the skills the slaves used to create their own culture."

As always in such cases, squeamishness has some local causes. The Library of Congress itself has been called "the big house" by black employees who in 1982 filed a class action suit charging discrimination and won an $8.5 million settlement (still under appeal by five plaintiffs). Billington says publicly he didn't want to disrupt what he characterized as "considerable progress toward interracial harmony." This progress evidently required the Library to yank the anti-lynching cartoons, three of which were part of a 1935 NAACP-organized show that was described by a New York newspaper critic at the time as "an exhibition which tears the heart and chills the blood.... If it upsets your complacency on the subject it will have been successful."

The deepest question here is, what is the point of a public display? To make us feel good? To keep Americans from knowing that sixty years ago there were cartoons captioned "White revelers at lynching," "Southern United States stained by blood from lynched black man," "'Son, derned if that nigger ain't made us late for prayer meetin'!'" and "The thrill that comes once in a lifetime: 'Souvenir, kiddies?'"? About "Back of the Big House," Allene Hayes, president of the Daniel A. P. Murray African American Cultural Association, told Linton Weeks of *The Washington Post*: "An exhibit is supposed to celebrate something positive." No wonder America, a nation built on slave labor, lacks a museum of slavery. For that matter, no wonder Berlin is just getting around to a museum of the Holocaust.

Under the sign of the smiley-face theory of public history, our official cultural institutions are cringing. Many curators won't even bother proposing shows likely to prove contentious. "There does seem to me a real danger that the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian will stop doing anything of interest," says Barbara Clark Smith, a curator in the National Museum of American History's division of social history. "People feel under pressure. There is anxiety about anything that suggests conflict along lines of class, for example, anything in labor history."

The purged exhibits differ, of course, but have this in common: in each case, professional historians ran into flak from outside the profession—from veterans, Freud-bashers and black employees, respectively. Now it is, in a certain way, a tribute to our civic life that large numbers of citizens lay claims to the common culture. Whether the issue is textbooks or museum shows, citizens want their say. There would be much to applaud if this concern were made manifest through speech. Let the Freud-debunkers publish pamphlets denouncing the show! (Or contribute to the catalog, as they were invited to do.) Let the disgruntled black employees publish their own critique! Alas, naysayers want to deprive others of their say. Censors of left, right and center agree on one thing: the virtue of amnesia.

Edward Linenthal, professor of religious studies at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, and co-editor of the forthcoming book *History Wars*, fears that today "history is supposed to function as identity therapy for all kinds of folks. History museums are becoming the focus because they've become more than cabinets for curiosities. These are public squares." Barbara Clark Smith puts it this way: "The more conversation, the better. But we don't know how to talk with each other about why things offend us. We only know how to say, 'Don't do it.'"

In the kingdom of the self-blinded, the censors delude themselves that we are healthier seeing no evil. We are a nation afraid of our own shadows.

TODD GITLIN's latest book is *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars* (Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt).

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DADDY'S BOY

By Charles Lane

The customers are just starting to file in for lunch at the Subway fast-food franchise at exit 47 off Interstate 75 in Macon, Georgia, when Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan bustles in and throws a friendly arm around the shoulder of Gene Helms, the store's proprietor. As local TV cameras roll, Gene becomes a prop for Buchanan's announcement of a "small business bill of rights." Buchanan ticks off a list of tax cuts and regulatory reforms. It's time the government helped "people like Gene" and punished the "transnational corporations" who have been packing up their factories in towns like Macon and taking them to Mexico, Buchanan says.

This message plays well enough with the two dozen or so curious locals assembled around the candidate. But a Subway franchise is not really the best place to make a point about the need to promote American small businesses over denationalized megacorporations. Subway provides the very kind of "McJobs" Buchanan's economic policies are supposed to obviate. The abolition of the inheritance tax on estates of $5 million or less would help the likes of Gene Helms a lot less than a measure Buchanan didn't include on his "bill of rights": a lower minimum wage.

On the other hand, a Subway shop is as good a place as any to arouse white anxieties about alleged government favoritism toward minorities. Item 8 on the small business bill of rights is an end to affirmative action "quotas." "My friends Phil Gramm and Bob Dole voted for the 1991 civil rights bill," Buchanan booms. "We're figuring on burying Bob Dole down here in Macon." Then he adds a parting slap at an ancient Southern bugaboo, the Voting Rights Act, which for thirty years has subjected the former Jim Crow states' voting practices to federal supervision: "I support its repeal," he says, to more cheers. "Every state in the Union should be treated the same."

The next day, Buchanan is at the Hilton in downtown New Orleans, facing another small gathering of conservative Republicans. He is telling them the Rocky Versace story. He's told it a hundred times before in a hundred other places. But he still manages to seem moved by it. Not long ago, Buchanan says, he was approached at a party in Washington by a man wearing a POW-MIA bracelet. Inquiring about the name on the bracelet, he was told it honored Humbert Versace, a Green Beret who had been executed in captivity by the Vietcong in 1963. Suddenly it dawned on Buchanan: Humbert Versace was the kid he'd known as Rocky Versace at Gonzaga, the Jesuit high school in Washington, D.C., Buchanan's hometown.

A little while later, Buchanan continues, he was leafing through *The Wall Street Journal*, when he saw a news item that made him burn with outrage. The World Bank, which is funded partly by the United States, had just loaned $260 million to the government of Vietnam. "And you know what that means, my friends," Buchanan tells the group. "It means that Rocky Versace's elderly mother is helping to guarantee a loan to the Communist regime that murdered her son." A woman in the audience gasps.

The Rocky Versace story has little to do with jobs or the economic concerns of the middle class, per se. It is a parable for the New World Order. The Rocky Versace tale is the illegal immigration story; it's the Mexico bailout story; it's the Bosnia story. It's the story of all the ways America's elites in Washington, New York and Hollywood are collaborating to sell out America's national sovereignty and to reward hostile foreigners and unworthy minorities at the expense of war heroes and their all-American moms.

Much has been made of the new Pat Buchanan. In contrast to his 1992 protest campaign against George Bush, which started fast in New Hampshire, then got bogged down in invective about gay rights and "culture war," this time Buchanan is harping on a much broader range of issues under the theme of "economic patriotism." He would impose high tariffs on Japan and China and a five-year ban on *legal* immigration. He wants to punish those corporations that move plants abroad. He denounced Republican cuts in Medicare, saying the savings should come instead from the abolition of foreign aid. In shock at the populist economics Buchanan is now peddling, some conservatives are suddenly branding him a "leftist."

But Pat Buchanan is anything but a leftist. His are

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the classic themes and sentiments of the old, pre-World War II right, an ideology with far deeper roots in American politics. Though he may momentarily emphasize one theme over the other, for him, cultural war and economic nationalism are two edges of the same sword he has always held up—that of America First. And that weapon—whether wielded against communists, liberals or now against elites and multinationals—is not his by means of a sudden ideological conversion or abiding religious zeal. It was bequeathed to him by somebody who towers over Buchanan's career like a colossus and whose particular blend of sentimental love, crude discipline and rightist politics marks Buchanan still.

II.

Buchanan's father, William B. Buchanan, had transcended a childhood marked by his own father's drinking and abuse to become a partner in a prosperous Washington accounting firm. "Pop," Buchanan informs us in his 1988 memoir, *Right From the Beginning*, played tennis every weekend at the Edgemoor Club in Bethesda and counted among his friends such men as Walter Tobriner, of the commission that ran D.C. before home rule, and Cliff Alder, a prominent defense attorney.

But Pop was no country-clubber. He was an unquestioning follower of the Catholic Church who never ceased feeling the pang of outsiderhood that faith connoted, even as he achieved a measure of prosperity in Washington. He was an admirer of pugnacious defenders of the faith against Communism like Francisco Franco and Joseph McCarthy, and a scion of brawlers who coached his boys in sports and encouraged them to respond violently to any slights against them or their friends. Before they were 10 years old, the Buchanan brothers were regularly made to descend into the family basement to hit a punching bag hundreds of times with each hand. If they failed to do so, Pop would beat them.

In Buchanan's memory, "Pop" Buchanan looms as a giant of sorts—a man with immense hairy forearms, who was "given to explosions—of laughter, applause, anger, and delight." And if one of those flashes of anger came up when he had "the strap" in his hands, well, heaven help the little Buchanan boys. When they stayed up past bedtime playing word games and muttering about their sister,

> we could hear Pop storming up the stairs two at a time; within seconds he would be in our bedroom, pulling his belt off, and flailing away as we hid tensely under the covers. Most of the time he went for the top bunks, where Bill and Hank slept. When he was through swinging the belt, he would yell, "Now, dammit, keep it down!" and "Go to sleep." Seconds after he departed, the laughter and the whispers would start up again. Had there been any casualties?

Pop didn't have much time for his children's sniveling, either:

> Among Pop's favorite expressions was "Offer it up," an all-purpose phrase that meant "stop whining and offer up your pain for the suffering souls in purgatory." Whenever we were hurt or injured or scraped, and we complained or cried, we would hear a loud and impatient "offer it up!" ... To show emotion and feeling was considered an unmanly thing to do; we were to be stoic about pain. Take your punishment. Don't let anyone see you cry. Whenever I read in today's press about some individual, especially some man, "revealing himself" (e.g., bleeding and bleating in print about his "feelings" and "hurt") I always feel a profound sense of embarrassment.

Reading Buchanan's memoir, it's hard not to be reminded of another book about growing up in the 1940s: *The Authoritarian Personality*. In the wake of World War II and the Holocaust, social scientist and philosopher Theodor Adorno and his colleagues at the University of California carried out an investigation of the psychological origins of prejudice toward minorities. In interviews with 2,000 subjects, they found that those who scored highest on a test designed to measure bigotry came from homes where the parents ruled by force.

In the confident Freudian jargon of the time, Adorno and company attributed this to "reaction-formation." Those forced to live under a violent and unreasoning father feel, and therefore learn, little empathy. They seek targets for their anger in those "who are deemed weak and who are socially acceptable as 'victims'."

> A basically hierarchical, authoritarian, exploitive parent-child relationship ... may well culminate in a political philosophy and social outlook which has no room for anything but a desperate clinging to what appears to be strong and a disdainful rejection of whatever is relegated to the bottom ... as well as to a dichotomous handling of social relations as manifested especially in the formation of stereotypes and of ingroup-outgroup cleavages.... It is especially the prejudiced man who seems intimidated by a threatening father figure. Display of a rough masculine façade seems to be compensation for such an intimidation and the ensuing passivity and dependency. Rigid repression of hostility against the parents may be accompanied by an occasional breaking through of drives in a crude and unsocialized form; under certain circumstances this may become dangerous to the very society to which there seems to be conformity.

The danger to society did not take long, in Buchanan's case, to become manifest. Violently as Pop tried to rein in Pat and his brothers, they seemed to exhibit less and less self-discipline as their teens wore on. The mayhem seems senseless, even quasi-criminal: they crashed parties, looking for someone to "sucker punch"; Buchanan's brother Hank, "morose" over breaking up with a girlfriend, drove his car head on into a concrete fence; Pat joined in the fun as Hank set a shop on fire for the offense of selling dirty magazines. "They were a little bit cruel in those days," recalls one of their school contemporaries.

With Pop never tiring of telling his boys how proud he was to be the grandson of Mississippi Confederates, the young Pat found his way to pelt a busload of black

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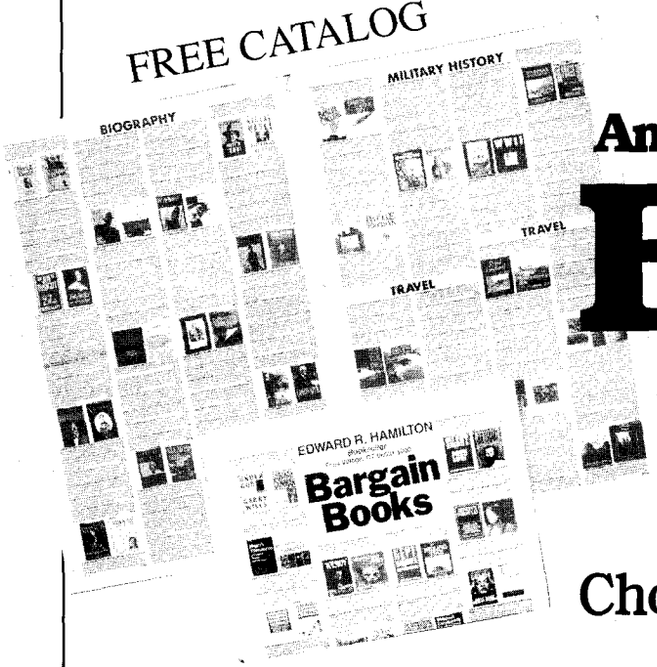

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"cleaning ladies" with snowballs and to hurl an apple at a black prostitute near Gonzaga. (It's doubtful that the "N-word" was considered out of bounds in the Buchanan milieu; in a Nixon White House memorandum, Buchanan used the phrase "house-nigger of the Politburo" to describe Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko.)

One night in August 1958, a crowd of young men was invited by Pat's older brothers, Henry and Bill (then in their early 20s), to the big stucco house to watch a football game and get drunk. At midnight, they adjourned to the Buchanans' vast front yard and began their own rowdy game of football. Next door, Harry Bernstein woke up. He got in his car and drove up the Buchanans' long driveway, but before he could tell them to pipe down, they swarmed his car and tried to tip it over. Bernstein escaped and called the police. Hank told the cops to get lost, slamming the door in their faces. Later, bottles rained on the Bernsteins' roof.

Buchanan portrays this as yet another instance of rowdy but innocent behavior. "Mr. Bernstein would not have been well advised to come over on foot that night," he chuckled to me. He was in Ocean City, Maryland, with his parents that night and didn't hear about it until he saw Harry Bernstein and Pop "animatedly discussing" something at the back fence a few days later.

But two surviving members of the Bernstein family place the story in a somewhat more complicated context. Rosemary Bernstein, Harry Bernstein's widow, recalls that the young men shouted "get the Jew" as they attacked the car. She recalls complaining to Buchanan's late mother, Catherine, on another occasion that the Buchanan boys were harassing her kids with anti-Semitic remarks.

The Bernsteins' daughter, Karen Smiley, was too young at the time of the 1960 incident to recall details. She did confirm, however, that anti-Semitic insults were often hurled from the Buchanans' side of the fence. "I'm questioning was my mother physically there to hear them say, 'Let's get the Jew,' " she told me. "I can tell you this. They didn't like Jews. There's no question about it. I don't think they woke up every morning with a prayer saying, 'Thank you God for not making me a woman and a Jew.' But they didn't like 'em. They would call us dirty Jew. I don't necessarily know that Pat Buchanan himself said those words.... He was thirteen years older than me. It was just understood about how the Buchanans felt about us."

Buchanan calls this "nonsense." And to be sure, one person's memory of ethnic hostility can be another's harmless intergroup jostling; sprays of Bernstein seltzer water were fired in response to Buchanan watermelon rinds, Smiley recalls. The Buchanans were also capable of personal warmth and easy contact with individual members of minorities (including, on other occasions, the Bernsteins, who were specially mailed a dollar bill signed by Buchanan's sister Angela when she became treasurer of the United States in 1981).

Among Pop's clients as an accountant were such wealthy Jewish businessmen as Benny Ourisman, the car dealer, and Harry and Melvin Viner of Sunshine Laundry. Pop treated his sons to admiring lectures on these men's business acumen and work ethic. "They didn't have a damn dime when they started," he would tell them. "And now they work for themselves and everybody else works for them." Mrs. Irving Moskowitz, who lived across the street, told me, "I watched Pat grow up, and I was at his wedding."

Pop taught his sons that, contrary to Northern propaganda, race relations in the rural South of the 1940s were a model of benign paternalism, which might help explain Pat's boast of how his mother, a nurse, "would take the midnight calls to go back into the inner city to minister to the sick, Negro and white." In that spirit, Buchanan and his father even appear to have played a role in the integration of Gonzaga. In 1952, Clarence Mitchell Jr., the executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was working in Washington. But he and his family lived in segregated Baltimore, where black schools were far inferior to white ones. As a way around that problem, Mitchell thought of sending Clarence III to Gonzaga, which had recently decided to include one black student in each new eighth-grade class. Mitchell knew Pop Buchanan and prevailed on him to ask the Jesuits to admit his son as the next black eighth-grader. Pop secured a spot for Clarence III and told Pat, then a ninth-grader at Gonzaga, to look out for the Mitchell boy. "Pat helped me adjust at a very difficult time in my life," Clarence Mitchell III recalls. Throughout, the rule was that personal loyalty, which meant loyalty to the Buchanan clan and its appendages, could trump, if not eliminate, abstract group suspicion.

As Buchanan grew older, his violence and mischievousness intensified. In his memoir, Buchanan recounts the clever ruses with which he dodged hapless police officers. Friends told *The New York Times* in 1992 that he learned to "steal" his father's car by releasing the brake, dimming the headlights and rolling it silently down the driveway. He went so far as to contrive an alter ego for himself. "Schuyler Colfax" (Ulysses S. Grant's vice president) became the name Buchanan would give the police when they arrested him for fighting or drinking. He even began to forge the name when making clandestine purchases with his father's gasoline credit card.

When all else failed, Pat relied on Pop, or on Pop's connections, to bail him out. Buchanan touched bottom in 1959. Early in his senior year at Georgetown University, he assaulted two police officers who were trying to give him a traffic ticket. Suspended from school for a year, he was saved from permanent expulsion by Pop, who went to the Jesuits running Georgetown to plea for leniency. Pop arranged for Cliff Alder to defend Pat. Instead of jail time and a felony convic-

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tion Buchanan was allowed to plead guilty to a misdemeanor and pay a fine.

Still, this was a turning point for Buchanan. It was now clear that the tactics his father had encouraged him to use on life and its complexities—all violent, essentially—were yielding diminishing returns. In adult life in a law-abiding society, brute force doesn't always help you get your way. But that does not mean that the contours of an authoritarian personality disappear: they merely reinvent themselves. After all, in the words of the Adorno group, in the authoritarian personality,

> there is no place for ambivalence or ambiguities. Every attempt is made to eliminate them, but they remain as potentials which might interfere at any time. In the course of these attempts, a subtle but profound distortion of reality has to take place, precipitated by the fact that stereotypical categorizations can never do justice to all the aspects of reality.

Eventually, Buchanan found his way to a profession where distortion of reality can often take place under the guise of objectivity, a profession that liberal societies even celebrate and lionize. In due course, Buchanan found his calling and became a journalist.

III.

In some ways, Buchanan's ideologically intense upbringing was the best preparation he could have had for a career in politics and journalism. The other side of Pop's brutal rearing was a polarized politics, inspired not only by his Catholic anti-Communism, but also by the nativist and isolationist America First movement and its leading spokesman, the one-time flying ace Charles A. Lindbergh. Pop had been a supporter of the movement, which was founded after the fall of France in 1940. True to his Scotch-Irish roots, he passionately believed that the hated English were trying to manipulate FDR into a fight between Hitler and Stalin that was none of America's business, just as they had exploited Belgian atrocity tales to embroil us in World War I.

Lindbergh would later become notorious as an apologist for the Nazi regime and bring public condemnation upon the America First committee by his declaration in September 1941 that "only three groups are agitating for American entry into the war—the British, the Jewish, and the Roosevelt administration." Lindbergh's rationale for avoiding war with Hitler was racial. Referring to the war in Europe shortly after Hitler had invaded Poland, he said: "This is not a question of banding together to defend the white race against foreign invasion. This is simply one more of those age-old struggles within our own family of nations."

It is likely that Pop preached this line to Pat long *after* Pearl Harbor, when the U.S. had gone to war in both the Pacific and Europe. There is no other way to account for Pat Buchanan's vivid memories of Pop's disquisitions on the subject, since he was only 7 years old when World War II ended. Some America Firsters themselves became early postwar critics of the Nuremberg trials and other efforts at denazification, arguing that such prosecutions were inevitably tainted by the involvement of the Soviets, who were "just as bad." In this, the old right isolationists adumbrated Buchanan's own later fixation, as a columnist, on the Justice Department's pursuit of John Demjanjuk and other alleged Nazi war criminals, a pursuit that he said (with some justification, in Demjanjuk's case) was delegitimated by its reliance on Soviet sources.

Another of Pop's political heroes was the prolific pundit Westbrook Pegler. Pegler, who wrote a popular column for the Hearst newspapers, had started out as a sports writer sympathetic to the New Deal. But by 1947, when Pop showed 9-year-old Pat his first sample of Pegler's prose, the columnist was known for his florid, funny and no-holds-barred attacks on Democrats. To Pegler, Franklin D. Roosevelt was "old Moose Jaw" and Harry Truman was "thin-lipped, a hater." Pegler was an avid supporter of Joseph McCarthy and even passed occasional advice to the Wisconsin senator on how to pursue his Communist foes. Another role model for Buchanan was the *National Review.* Working at his father's accounting office during his year of suspension from school, Buchanan discovered copies of William F. Buckley's young magazine lying on a coffee table and was instantly hooked. Journalism of the sort practiced by Pegler and the *National Review* seemed to offer Buchanan a means to vent the authoritarian rage within himself while remaining true to Pop's teachings. Buckling down to his studies at Georgetown the next year, he applied for, and was awarded, a scholarship to Columbia Journalism School. He had found, as he put it, an "outlet for my combative proclivities."

His year in New York was followed, in 1962, by a job at the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat.* Working there until 1966, Buchanan would spend his days pounding out editorials and his nights carousing in the jazz clubs of mostly black East St. Louis with his fellow "four musketeers": Denny Walsh and Bill Feustal, colleagues from the *Globe-Democrat,* and a police lieutenant named Jim Allman who, according to Walsh, doubled as president of the local chapter of the John Birch Society.

The *Globe-Democrat* resembled Buchanan's boyhood environment in other ways, too. The paternalistic publisher, Richard Amberg, was, like Pop Buchanan, a fierce right-wing anti-communist and foe of desegregationism. Like Pop, he encouraged Pat's aggressive tendencies against selected enemies ("slice him from rectum to belly button," he once told Buchanan of an editorial target), but otherwise afforded Buchanan a permissive climate in which to operate. Not only was Buchanan granted freedom to write just about anything he wanted for the paper's editorial page, but the

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At Bay

"There's one presidential campaign in either party that has a woman in charge—and that's Pat Buchanan's," declares the woman in charge, Angela "Bay" Buchanan, sister, adviser and field general of the man whose family, faith and country campaign seems thoroughly inhospitable to women like, well, herself. She's a divorced woman raising her three young sons on her own (their pictures are the only softening touches in her office). She has a more-than-fulltime job, nothing new for her, and her combative intensity rivals her brother's. If anything, this hyper-efficient operative seems more like an exemplar of mainline feminism than the far right's idea of the traditional woman.

The line on Bay Buchanan is that she's Bobby Kennedy to Pat's JFK—at least, that's what conservatives say when they want to be nice. Off the record, she's accused of not just managing but micromanaging her brother's campaign and keeping dissent, and access to Pat himself, to a minimum. "Bay froze everybody out," complains one observer of the 1992 campaign. "If it wasn't Bay's idea, it wasn't a good idea."

Bay Buchanan has never budged much from the family creed of toughness and togetherness. She caught the political bug early, worked closely with her brother on Nixon's campaign and only really rebelled when she married a Mormon lawyer and left the Catholic Church for the Tabernacle.

In 1981 Ronald Reagan, who picked her as treasurer for his 1980 and '84 campaigns, made her the youngest-ever treasurer of the United States. And ever since, her own family life has neither kept her at home nor out of politics. In 1990, not too long after the arrival of a third son, she ran for California state treasurer, losing, barely, in the Republican primary. In the fall of 1991 she urged her brother to follow his own instincts and enter the '92 presidential race. Bay, as number one in his campaign organization, helped negotiate his prime-time appearance at the GOP convention, where he loosed his heavy artillery in America's cultural war. Before he redeployed the same rhetoric for the current race, he made sure Bay would be with him. "Pat says, 'Where are you going to be?' because he wants me at the helm, and that's the bottom line. He runs if I will do this, and it's a sacrifice for me, and it's one that I've enjoyed thoroughly."

So she's at the helm of the campaign to elect the man who wrote that the birthrate of 1.7 children to each Western woman, compared to the free fertility of "the black, brown and yellow peoples who look to inherit the earth," amounts to "racial suicide" of the "self-indulgent." To elect a man who decries the "assault" on "[o]ld institutions and symbols of an heroic if tragic past" such as the Citadel. Who declared, "The Momma Bird builds the nest." Family loyalty aside, what is this supremely modern woman doing?

Ask her and she, like so many other conservative women, bristles. "I'm a member of a very traditional church, and traditional values play a very important role in my life. They were instilled in me by my family, and I raise the children, attempting to instill those values in them." She believes government "should encourage those things which we think are healthy in societies, such as families, the ability for people to raise children. . . ." What about mothers who, like her, work? She gets very still and directs an Arctic stare at the presumptuous questioner. Then she says, with a deliberateness that is almost menacing, "Mothers like me *have* to work." Traditionalism, meet realism. Fair enough, though she could acknowledge that precisely the same need has motivated millions of women to look favorably on feminism (and unfavorably on her brother). A feminist, you might say, is a woman who has been mugged by reality.

And yet, even when she speaks of her social ideals, Bay Buchanan's family values are curiously gender-neutral. "I think it is an ideal situation, which unfortunately is very difficult to attain in today's society, where you have a parent at home with the children, and you have a breadwinner and that they work it out together. However, I do believe strongly that there are many very solid families who have made the decision, because this is what's best for their family, that both work. Maybe for economic reasons, maybe for personal reasons. I know many women who, if they spend a lot of time at home all day long, by the end of the week, they will not be good mothers. They'd be much better coming home after four hours of work, or six hours, or eight hours, or whatever it is they choose to do. I think that what's very important is that we create a society that allows those choices, that a mother can stay home." These are not the politics of Donna Reed but of Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Or so it appears. In fact, Bay Buchanan presents less of a personal and political contradiction than you might think. The woman-in-the-kitchen charge against "traditional values" or "family values" conservatives is largely a liberal stereotype—or, to borrow the infelicitous phrase of a spokeswoman for the Family Research Council, the woman in the kitchen is a straw man. For one thing, the right is unwilling to consign some of its most effective activists and organizers (a recent *New York Times* story mentioned Marlene Elwell, Marlys Popma, Sharon Rexroth and Ione Dilley as conservative power brokers in Iowa) to the realm of bake sales and election-day phone banking. For another, what conservatives tend to mean when they talk about "family values" these days is not an (increasingly unrealistic) opposition to women working outside the home but to gay rights, abortion and aggressively secular public school curricula. The most that Pat Buchanan and the Christian Coalition will say on the working woman question is that many or most women would really like to be at home with their children when those children are very young and that confiscatory tax policies force mothers out of their homes and into the workforce. What they seldom concede is that, as Bay Buchanan says, lots of mothers with all kinds of beliefs have to don their powersuits or janitors' smocks, some so the family can get by, some so that the family can get ahead, some so that they can satisfy their own ambitions.

There are many reasons to disagree with Bay Buchanan and to disparage the work that she's doing. Pat Buchanan is the candidate of the resentful, scared and truculent, the champion of an America that is outwardly wholesome and inwardly ugly. And his sister believes in what he stands for, even calls him one of her heroes (Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher are the others). She has put her political skills at the service of a nasty nativism. But she cannot be dismissed as a victim of false consciousness. She is a modern traditional woman. If that seems paradoxical, it is a paradox that is more and more a common fact of American life. It makes liberals uneasy. It doesn't seem to bother her brother at all.

JENNIFER BRADLEY

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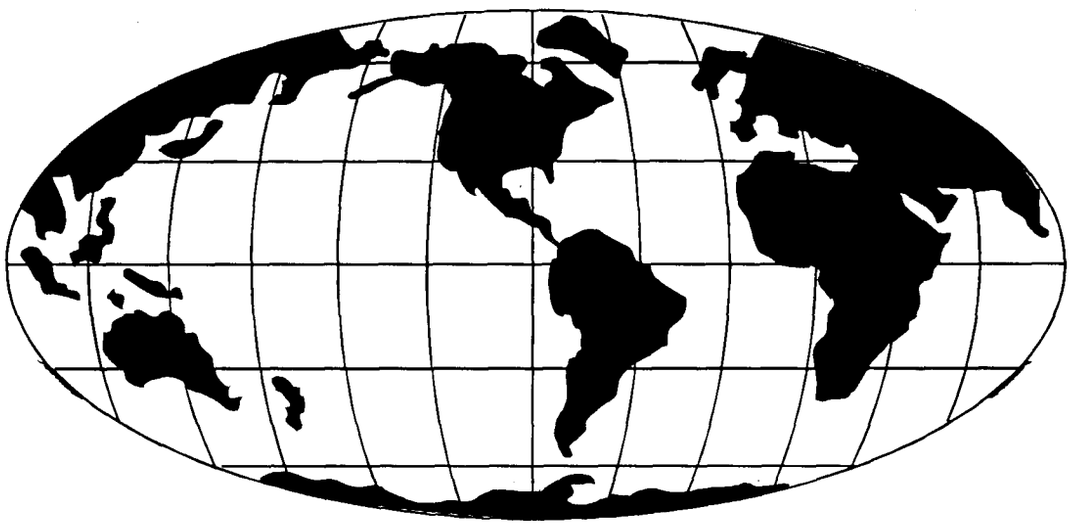

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editorial "we"—like the pseudonym "Schuyler Colfax"—shielded him from personal accountability.

Buchanan wrote home that he had "a license to kill." He pictured himself as Westbrook Pegler, "standing flat on his feet and swinging for the belly." Recognizably Buchananesque editorials from those years bore such headlines as "MEDICARE: CRUEL HOAX ON THE AGED" and, in response to the Warren Court's 1963 decision on prayer in the public schools, "OUTLAWING GOD FROM THE SCHOOLS." Another pet cause was Katanga, a mineral-rich province of the Congo where a group of Belgian-backed rebels was attempting to break away from the central government's control. The *Globe-Democrat* railed against U.S. complicity in a United Nations conspiracy to keep the province in the Congo. Editorials bearing Buchanan's stylistic stamp carried headlines like "RED SUPPORT FOR CANNIBALISM" and "MAO'S ALLIES—CONGO SAVAGES":

> The tragedy of American foreign policy is that because we are pro-civil rights and pro-Negro at home, we have not only acceded but have led the way, in the name of anti-colonialism, precipitously pushing out of Africa the white European nations which provided the only stability on the continent and whose sudden departures left a ghastly vacuum of power.... The nations of Africa, aided and abetted by the communists, have aligned themselves solidly behind the rebels, who are actually savages inflamed by propaganda, whisky and dope from Moscow and Peking to kill, murder, pillage, and cannibalize not only hundreds of whites ... but countless thousands of their own people as well.

One piece, headed "BOBBY SHOULD CALL TEDDY," mocked James Meredith, the first black student to attend the University of Mississippi, for his alleged academic troubles. It suggested Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who was supporting Meredith's bid to remain at the school, should call his brother to take Meredith's exams for him, just as Ted had relied on a substitute to take a Spanish test for him at Harvard in 1951.

An editorial by Buchanan, "PERILOUS NAIVETE OF DR. KING," described the prophet of the American civil rights movement as "sometimes demagogic and irresponsible in his public statements, dangerously naïve in his choice of associates and negligent of the consequences of his words and deeds." A December 2, 1964, editorial hailed J. Edgar Hoover for "tee[ing] off on the charismatic messiah of Negro rights while the latter was boating about the Caribbean preparing his acceptance address for the Nobel Peace Prize."

As these pieces suggest, the *Globe-Democrat*'s relationship with the FBI was not the usual one of a paper with a government agency. Buchanan's editorial about King, as he acknowledges in his book, was based on FBI information about supposed communists in the civil rights movement that had been supplied directly by the bureau to Amberg, who channeled it to Buchanan.

In a 1977 investigative article, *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that Amberg, who was listed at the time as one of the FBI's bureau's 8,000 "correspondents" around the country, had eagerly loaned his paper to the bureau's COINTELPRO campaign aimed at planting stories to discredit members of the civil rights movement whom Hoover considered threats to domestic security. Working with his roommate, Walsh, who was the bureau's main contact with the *Globe-Democrat*, Buchanan "pursued" FBI tips. He breathlessly recounts how he and Walsh, acting on information from the bureau, buttonholed Herbert Aptheker, a leading theoretician of the Communist Party, upon his arrival at the St. Louis airport. In the process, they discovered that Aptheker was being hosted in town by one Theodor Rosebury, a science professor at Washington University who had once worked on government biological warfare research. Armed with these facts, he crows, "We were on page one."

As we now know, most of the people whom the FBI fingered to the paper as Communists were, in fact, party members. And there isn't anything inherently wrong with feeding off government leaks. Still, the *Globe-Democrat*, and Buchanan, clearly crossed the line separating journalism from clandestine support for government propaganda. The paper subjected the FBI's motivations to no objective scrutiny, never asked the basic, obvious question of how great a threat was posed by the Communist Party, which by this post-McCarthy period was tiny and heavily infiltrated by the bureau. Nor did it ever occur to the paper to wonder whether its FBI-aided discovery of a few Communists here and there undermined the basic legitimacy of a cause that even Buchanan now concedes was "liberalism's finest hour." And, of course, otherwise decent people could get smeared in the process. The Rosebury "scoop" of which Buchanan was so proud resulted in a campaign of vilification against a professor who had undeniably been involved in left-wing activities but against whom there was not a shred of evidence suggesting he ever did anything to undermine national security.

IV.

Actually, the Rosebury affair led to a falling out of sorts between Buchanan and Amberg, who became irate when Buchanan revealed publicly that the president of Washington University had negotiated with Amberg not to use the *Globe* editorial page to call for a boycott of the school's fund drive. As a parting favor, however, Amberg helped Buchanan get in touch with his old friend Nixon, who was looking for help with his fledgling comeback campaign and whom Buchanan remembered from dinner-table conversation at home as "the man who nailed Hiss."

In many ways, Buchanan's authoritarian personality—although far less complex than Nixon's tortured motivations—was a perfect political instrument for the dark, polarizing side of Nixon. Nixon relied on Bu-

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chanan to send pseudonymous letters to the editor complaining about critical coverage of the president or favorable coverage of his enemies. Buchanan compiled the White House daily summary of press reports—which Buchanan sometimes skewed to feed the Old Man's siege mentality.

It was Buchanan who drafted Nixon's famous outburst against the Senate for rejecting his 1970 nomination of the conservative Florida Judge G. Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court, a jeremiad in which Nixon blasted the Senate's "discrimination" against the South. (Buchanan's original phrase, "the Old Confederacy," was too provocative even for Nixon, who crossed it out, according to John Ehrlichman's memoir, *Witness to Power.*) Buchanan also wrote Spiro Agnew's famous November 1969 attack on the press. This speech, which blasted the media as an "unelected elite," temporarily made Buchanan the star of the speechwriting staff.

But Nixon, of course, was not a simple polarizer: he was a pragmatist and often surprisingly liberal in domestic policy. And so the fit with Buchanan was never an easy one. In 1970, Nixon was facing a crucial decision about whether he should enforce court orders requiring Southern states to desegregate their public schools, by busing if necessary. Buchanan rallied forces at the White House who urged the president not to enforce the court orders. By February 1970, he was circulating a proposed speech for Vice President Spiro Agnew that would, as he boasted to White House counsel Leonard Garment, "tear the scab off the issue of race in this country." Buchanan's memo argued that "the ship of integration is going down; it is not our ship; it belongs to national liberalism; and we ought not to be aboard." Now was the time for the president to win over supporters of George C. Wallace, the Alabama governor who had won several Southern states in the 1968 presidential election.

Ehrlichman, Nixon's domestic policy adviser, could barely believe what he was reading. "Bad politics in PB extreme position—segregation forever," he scribbled on one piece of paper. Buchanan based his memo on a single datum: his reported conversation with a friend in South Carolina who said that a lot of Southerners would have attacked Fort Sumter if not for the fact that the federal government had nuclear weapons. Garment, by contrast, researched the subject thoroughly, discovering that, yes, many Southern whites were enraged—but many were looking for a peaceful solution. He also took the time to check out black claims of housing discrimination and saw they were legitimate, too. Ehrlichman and Garment overruled Buchanan and devised a strategy, which Nixon adopted, whereby Nixon would support the courts but soften the blow with conciliatory rhetoric about Southern feelings and federal aid to Southern schools. The courts were obeyed, a potentially bloody crisis in the South was averted, and Buchanan was left to fume that "a golden opportunity is lost."

The segregation battle was the high-water mark of Buchanan's influence around the White House. He was useful when the president needed to inflame the Republican hard core, but otherwise his advice was considered mainly as a gauge of right-wing sentiment. Of course, the greatest crisis for the fanatically anti-communist Buchanan was the opening to China. Asked about it today, he is still uneasy. "You know, I'm ambivalent about that," he muses. "When Nixon did that—and I went to China with him—Americans were still fighting and dying in Southeast Asia against Asian Communism, and the idea that Richard Nixon could be toasting Mao Tse-tung ... undermined the moral authority of our engagement in the Vietnam War. It was a dreadful affront to Taiwan. But the truth is, it gave Nixon enormous leverage with the Soviets.... [F]aced with two adversaries, you simply could not deny yourself contact and communication with the one. I think the idea of communication and contact with China was right, but the manner in which we did it over there in Beijing was a little overdone."

Buchanan himself reluctantly helped sell the China trip to a wary right led by John Ashbrook, a congressman from Ohio, and William F. Buckley of the *National Review.* Having begged chief of staff H.R. Haldeman to let him go to Beijing with Nixon, Buchanan urged him to take Buckley, too. But, ambivalent about his role, and about the Sino-U.S. communiqué, Buchanan resigned in protest upon returning to Washington. Nixon was preoccupied with his 1972 re-election campaign and responded indifferently, according to Haldeman's diaries. Buchanan backed down. "I spent a week of back and forth," he recalls. "[But] I wanted to be in that campaign." What he doesn't dwell on is that this meant sacrificing his principles to stay with a man who, unbeknownst to him, would have been just as happy to see him go.

In his memoirs, Buchanan portrays himself as a diehard Nixon loyalist to the end. And indeed, when Watergate began to eat away at the presidency, Buchanan fought for his side—in pugnacious testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee, even in a barroom clash with Democratic Washington superlawyer Edward Bennett Williams. But by August 5, 1974, Buchanan, too, felt betrayed by the Old Man. That morning, write Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in *The Final Days*, Buchanan found himself

> rubbing his hands, rocking back and forth in his chair, trying to articulate what he felt after almost ten years of service to Richard Nixon. He brooded about how hard he and others had worked on the defense, how he had persistently maintained that "the Old Man" was a victim—not without his faults, but a victim. Buchanan seemed on the verge of boiling over again. The Old Man had lied to him and everyone else. He had connived. The President had listened to the tape three months earlier, in May.... The family, Julie in particular, was pressuring the President not to resign. But Buchanan was clear in his own mind. It was over, he said.

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Buchanan lobbied the remaining holdouts in the Nixon family to support resignation.

Buchanan's trajectory at the Reagan White House followed virtually the same path as his Nixon experience. Indeed, it was as if he had learned nothing from his prior stint. In March 1985, Chief of Staff Donald Regan, in an attempt to shore up his own shaky standing among Washington conservatives, hired Buchanan to be Director of Communications. As nominal supervisor of all White House speechwriting, Buchanan loaned his rhetorical skills to Ollie North's p.r. campaign on behalf of the Nicaraguan Contras and lobbied for Reagan to resist sanctions against South Africa.

"I hadn't encountered anyone like Pat since I had to deal with the White Citizens' Councils in my days as a Mississippi newspaper editor," former Reagan press secretary Larry Speakes recalls in his memoirs, *Speaking Out*. "That's not to say that Pat was a racist, just that he was so blindly reactionary.... Pat Buchanan caused more trouble in only two years than anyone else who worked closely with Reagan during the first six years." Speakes mourns the wasted hours spent "cutting hardline stuff written by Buchanan's people out of speeches."

Two episodes eventually caused Buchanan to wear out his welcome. The first was his March 1986 *Washington Post* op-ed at the height of the Contra debate in Congress. In the piece, he framed the issue as a question of whether Hill Democrats would "stand with Ronald Reagan and the resistance, or with Daniel Ortega and the Communists." Buchanan had published the article without telling Regan first, on the correct assumption that Reagan himself would be delighted once he read it. However, the piece also succeeded in fatally alienating Congress, helping to doom the aid package. It was "completely unauthorized, vicious, and had the opposite effect he had intended," Speakes recalls.

The second Buchanan-related disaster was Reagan's trip to Bitburg. The German military cemetery contained the graves of several dozen Waffen S.S. troops from Hitler's Army. While the trip was Helmut Kohl's idea, and White House aide Michael Deaver agreed to it without first thinking to check who was buried in the cemetery, Buchanan was among those who most vociferously urged Reagan not to back down once Jewish groups and others began protesting the visit. In a White House meeting with Jewish leaders, Buchanan provocatively reminded them that they were "Americans first," as fellow staffer Ed Rollins later recounted to Reagan biographer Lou Cannon. He also repeatedly scrawled the phrase "Succumbing to the pressure of the Jews" on his notepad during the meeting—and some of those present saw it. Buchanan was pilloried in the press, though he insisted that he had merely been copying down a phrase that Jewish leaders themselves were employing.

Buchanan's search for personal comfort, which he felt only in situations of stark and polarized simplicity, led him into further battles. From Bitburg on, Buchanan's tenure was marked by a losing bureaucratic struggle with "the mice"—moderate staff minions loyal to Michael Deaver and Nancy Reagan. He couldn't get his protégé, Peggy Noonan, approved as chief speechwriter. He even wound up relegated to a windowless basement office. His final sin was to let it be known in early 1987 that he was considering a presidential run of his own in 1988; he quit in March 1987, shortly before he was to be fired. With George Shultz's State Department still bitter over his South Africa performance, he was denied the appointment as U.S. ambassador to NATO that he had coveted—just as he had ended his tenure with Gerald Ford by being denied a posting to South Africa.

By the time of his second White House stint, however, Buchanan had found a cost-free way to appease his deep need for angry confrontation in that 1980s invention: the media pundit. After leaving the Ford administration, he had signed on with a local radio station to do an afternoon call-in show in which he squared off with liberal former CIA press secretary Tom Braden. In 1982, "Buchanan and Braden" mutated into the TV show "Crossfire." After "Crossfire," there was "The McLaughlin Group" and "The Capital Gang." On all these shows, Buchanan's authoritarian mania was the key to high ratings. In fact, much of the context of the discussion of politics on television today—its binary axis, its reduction to sloganeering, its preference for extremism and anger—can be traced to the impact of Buchanan's own personality.

"Crossfire," in other words, suited him perfectly. And just as Pop once rescued him from the consequences of his aggression, so television actually rewarded him for the vehemence of his views. He could swing from his heels with no real fear of being held accountable for anything he said. If anyone took offense, he would summon his now-practiced charm and insist that it had all been a joke. "He survived for two reasons," says Eric Alterman, who came to know Buchanan while writing *Sound & Fury*, a book about Washington pundits. "First, he was so damn likable, and second, no one could really bring themselves to take him seriously."

The world of the Washington punditocracy, it turned out, was a permissive culture, too, capable in its own way of coddling a wayward bully boy. When Buchanan got in trouble over his 1990 remark, "there are only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East. The Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States," all his past dubious crusades were dredged up and thrown back in his face. Bitburg. Demjanjuk. His interest in fair hearings for alleged Nazi war criminals like Arthur Rudolph and Klaus Barbie. The New York-based Buckley, his old mentor, wrote a tortured 20,000-word essay that concluded: "I find it impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge" of anti-Semitism.

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Buchanan was deeply hurt and aggrieved. "He went through a very isolated and insular period," recalls a person who then worked closely with Buchanan.

Washington chums, including Jewish friends, however, did not turn their backs on Buchanan. Fellow Capital Gangers like Mark Shields and Al Hunt rushed to defend him from the charge of anti-Semitism. "I waffled. We all waffled," says one talk-show colleague who now regrets doing so. On the evening of October 15, 1991, dozens of Washington insiders gathered for a black-tie benefit in the dining room of the Mayflower Hotel to "roast" Buchanan. The master of ceremonies for the event was Mark Shields; attendees included Virginia Governor Doug Wilder, Senators Jay Rockefeller and Orrin Hatch and then-House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich. When the time came for jokes at Buchanan's expense, Mark Russell quipped that Buchanan had "organized a delegation last month to attend Klaus Barbie's funeral." The event raised over $200,000 for the Spina Bifida Association of America. It also signaled, in a way, that all was forgiven. And it may have helped convince Buchanan that the very polarization he found most congenial could work in the broader political arena. Which is why, perhaps, he saw little conflict in transferring his television skills to a run for the presidency.

V.

Buchanan's strategy this time seems to hinge on the political equivalent of a sucker punch. He thinks there is one man, Phil Gramm, between him and the one-on-one contest he craves with Bob Dole. He is convinced that by stealing delegates away from Gramm in the Louisiana caucus, which takes place a week before Iowa's in February, he can create a press hubbub, generate momentum and blow past the other conservative pretenders in Iowa and New Hampshire. Only Gramm and Buchanan are contesting Louisiana. The other candidates, in the interest of party unity, agreed to bow out of the caucus, so as not to upstage Iowa. "You don't talk to us like that," Buchanan responded when the Iowa party chairman called him to request his cooperation.

And his polarizing message is as stark as ever. Added to the religious war, there is an economic war, in which the working man is hounded by the international order, overclass elites and underclass deadbeats. His ability to bond with the economically distressed people he meets on the campaign trail is unmistakable. A bit bewildered himself by the compromises and complexities of the modern political world, he plainly does feel the pain of those middle Americans for whom the complexities of modern, internationalized life have become a constant source of grievance. On this narrower, and newly intense, band of the American political spectrum, Buchanan has found the frequency; and those who do not take it seriously risk misjudging him. "There is a simplicity that exists on the far side of complexity," he once wrote of his teenage political idol, Joseph McCarthy, "and there is a communication of sentiment and attitude not to be discovered by careful exegesis of text."

If the post-cold-war era is particularly prone to emotional polarization, then Buchanan is perhaps right in seeing that he has found his moment. He calls this "a plastic juncture" in history. As audiences listen quizzically, Buchanan explains that the United States is in the same insolvent position today that the British Empire was in 1913, thanks to four decades during which it had "meddled in everyone else's wars while we stayed out." The cold war and its costs were necessary in their times, but now the American war for Western civilization is an internal one.

Many Republicans objected to President Clinton's decision to send troops to Bosnia. Only Buchanan considered it a possible impeachable offense. Appearing on "Nightline" shortly after the president's speech announcing the deployment, Pat Buchanan told Ted Koppel that Clinton might deserve to be tried by the Senate for sending soldiers into a war zone without the express approval of Congress. When Koppel countered that a president sometimes has no choice but to take the reins of foreign policy, as Franklin D. Roosevelt had in his pre-World War II battles with the isolationists, Buchanan observed that "some of us believe" FDR "behaved unconstitutionally" by trying to nudge the United States into the war in Europe before Pearl Harbor. Like Clinton, Buchanan sees this as a time to learn the lessons of the pre-World War II era; he just sees the lessons differently. The man who defended Ollie North's lies to Congress on behalf of the Nicaraguan Contras still evinces indignation at FDR's "plotting" to involve the U.S. in the war against Hitler before Pearl Harbor.

It is, of course, barely conceivable that Buchanan will pull off the political trick of winning the nomination. But it is certainly not impossible that the spirit of Buchanan, the one bequeathed him by his father, will further distort the Republican legacy.

One senses that, in some ways, he has eerily mirrored the career of his father's idol, Westbrook Pegler, the pugnacious pundit who served as Pat's first professional role model. Pegler, as it happens, grew up in a home dominated by a loving, opinionated, but sometimes abusive father. People made the same sorts of comments about him that they make about Buchanan today. "To have been young and to have met Westbrook Pegler," wrote Murray Kempton in the pages of this journal thirty-two years ago, "was to have been surprised at how gentle he was and how glad to see you." Yet as Pegler grew older, Kempton wrote, "suddenly the rhetoric was just so much terrible evidence of an interior grievance to which the supposed object of his wrath was irrelevant." So ultimately, of course, was his wrath. But then Pegler, mercifully, never ran for president of the United States. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Cast of Character

Let's begin discussing **Nixon** (Hollywood) with what is usually put last, or peripherally, in an Oliver Stone review: his directing talent. It's most easily identified by his attitude toward linear narrative. True, several of his films, including the recent *Heaven and Earth*, were made in relatively conventional narrative style; but when Stone is most himself, the self he has apparently been working toward, he is too impatient for mere linearity.

The Doors, JFK, Natural Born Killers are the work of a man infuriated by the fact that he can show us only one image at a time, can have us hear only one line, or combination of sounds, at a time. It's obviously odd to compare Stone with James Joyce, but they do share one impulse. Joyce moved in his art from the monadic to the polyphonic, the chordal, trying to encompass the teeming complexity of the human mind in every split second. Something of the same rage at his art, at the fate of being able to present only one image at a time, gnaws at Stone.

Nixon assumes that a film biography cannot rightly be linear because everyone carries his entire life with him all the time. The backpack, ever present and always growing, is invisible in life but need not be so in film. An instance: when Nixon's path to the presidency is made easier by the Kennedy assassinations, someone remarks that the two deaths have helped him. Nixon says, "No, there were four." Then we get visual references to the early deaths of two of his brothers, which made it possible for him to go to law school.

Most of the film is much more densely woven than this episode: with contrapuntal time strands, lightning play of black-and-white renderings against full color for emphasis, with repetitions of shots from different angles to suggest how different minds will remember the moment—all volatile, scintillating. (Also a few stylistic bows to *Citizen Kane.*) Sometimes a reference is banal, as when Nixon's dead mother appears to him near the end of the film, but mostly the texture of this three-hours-plus film is exciting as we feel Stone trying to open, open, open.

Next, the acting. All the supporting roles are adequately played, but if they were done even better—which would have been unnecessary—they still couldn't have been much more than supportive of the central figure. Anthony Hopkins's performance as Nixon consummates all their work, all of Stone's work. We very soon forget that Hopkins, despite hair and dental touches, doesn't look like that too-familiar face and figure. Hopkins plunges straight for the core discomforts in Nixon, the conflicts in a man ravenous for power who not only is uneasy in public but who patently dislikes most of those who are closest to him.

Hopkins creates the manic, insistent, pumped-up energy, plus the almost calculated obtuseness about defeats. (The one fissure in that obtuseness—"You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore"—is the result of a promise to his wife to leave politics: a promise that he, alas, breaks.) Hopkins overwhelms us with the conviction that everything about this man is fabricated except that drive for power, a drive that sometimes seems to hag-ride Nixon himself. Hopkins made me remember that, when Nixon was on TV with his wife, I used to think that he was twisting her arm behind her back to make her smile; and that, looking and listening to him, I used to wonder if everyone else thought he was as mentally ill as I thought him.

For Robert Richardson, the cinematographer, for Brian Berdan and Hank Corwin, the editors, all of whom are Stone veterans, only sheer admiration will suffice. About the score a few questions. What John Williams wrote was helpful, but I didn't understand why Schubert's second symphony was quoted at one point or why, at the Lincoln Memorial, "John Brown's Body" was slammed in so heavily.

And now, the element that most others will consider first, the screenplay by Stephen J. Rivele, Christopher Wilkinson and Stone—which is to say, the biography as such. In candor, I note first that it would be hard to loathe Nixon more than I do. I'm aware of his accomplishments—the accord with China, for prime instance. I'm aware, too, that as Tom Wicker says, Nixon's punishment for Watergate may now seem too hard after "Savingsgate," the savings-and-loan outrage "for which neither Presidents Reagan nor Bush suffered banishment." Nonetheless, from the very start of his political career, Nixon stained himself with guile and

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The American President. *Two romances: a love affair in the White House and a steadfastly liberal president. Enjoyable. (Reviewed 12/18/95)* **Carrington.** *Bloomsbury "characters"—Dora Carrington (Emma Thompson) and Lytton Strachey (Jonathan Pryce)—in a somewhat cool but splendidly acted, intelligently written love story. (12/4/95)* **Get Shorty.** *Gangster comedy in Florida and L.A. Loose and generally lively. John Travolta is the mainstay. (11/13/95)* **Sense and Sensibility.** *Emma Thompson again—this time as actress and screen adapter. No complaints: we're lucky to have her. Austen is unavoidably reduced here, but the reduction sparkles. (1/8&15/96)*—**SK**

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calumny made all the worse by his righteous rhetoric. (Wicker reports that, as early as 1950, Averell Harriman walked out of a supper he was supposed to attend with Nixon, saying, "I will not break bread with that man!") His opportunistic progress right up to Watergate, his grim maneuverings in Vietnam, his smarmy schemings to reestablish himself in the years between his resignation and his death—these put him well beyond the furthest pale. The historian Joan Hoff says in her study of Nixon that he was not unprincipled but aprincipled, meaning that he had "no apparent awareness of conventional moral or ethical standards." This strikes me as generous.

All of the above is to underscore that I went to Stone's film with one question uppermost in my mind: Why? Even acknowledging Stone's understandably persistent concern with Vietnam, why this long film about Nixon? To some extent, Stone answers this question, which he clearly foresaw.

Nixon begins with a disclaimer, stating that the film uses dramatic license, including condensation, that some scenes "have been hypothesized or condensed." I'm unequipped to check all the rearrangements, though one of them struck me forcibly. The weird scene at the Lincoln Memorial at 4 a.m. one morning during the Vietnam War has patently been fiddled with: the confrontation with students, which here ends pensively, in fact ended with ugly gestures on both sides. As this film moves along—races, despite its length—we see that it is neither an attack on Nixon nor a defense. Nor is it a tragedy. Large pronouncements have been made, some of them by Stone, using that word; but *Nixon* is no tragedy. The protagonist's fall causes no catharsis. For the kindliest viewer, it is pathetic; for the rest of us, it is high time.

The picture is a case study. It examines Nixon's insecurities and his resultant aggressions; his firm beliefs at one moment and his equally firm dismissal of them later; his combination of overweening complacency and defensiveness; his grabbings and his near-shock when some of the grabbings succeed; his desperation to attract people and his failure to do so. (After Nixon's fall, Kissinger says, "Can you imagine what this man would have been if he had ever been loved?") However, despite Stone's mercurial gifts, the film does not become an artistic whole; it remains an examination of characteristics.

What's missing is what Stone's best films have had: a subtext, a large theme evoked by the action on the screen. With *JFK*, it was a numinous atmosphere of uncertainty that has haunted this country since that murder. With *Natural Born Killers*, it was the fusing of life and media reports of life, so that we all swim in a sea of horrific electronic assault. But with *Nixon* such a theme is not discernible. This leaves the film not much more than the series of events presented—thus, in any deep sense, purposeless.

Two last points. We get only a few glimpses, and then they are unidentified, of the garish uniforms for White House guards that Nixon ordered when he became president, a juvenile fantasy that apparently was soon too much even for his admirers. And Stone never touches the basic mystery of those Oval Office tapes. (Of which there are 4,000 hours; only sixty-three hours have been made public.) They were the only real proof of his complicity in the Watergate cover-up. Why didn't he destroy them before the public knew that they existed? My own guess is that, through his Quaker upbringing, there lingered a small potential for guilt in the "aprincipled" Nixon, a tiny damp hunger for punishment. His virtual rebirth after resignation, after punishment, seems to confirm this.

Well, *Nixon* goes forth now to run the gauntlet of historians and biographers. So it should, although—as discussed here lately—the history-and-film relation can be more complex than accuracy tests indicate. One actual statement, however, lingers in the mind. In the clips here of Nixon's funeral service, we see Senator Dole predicting that the second half of this century will be known as the age of Nixon. A shiver ran through me. It may turn out to be true. •

Paris Is Burning

BY FAREED ZAKARIA

Jihad vs. McWorld: How the Planet is Both Falling Apart and Coming Together and What This Means for Democracy by Benjamin R. Barber

(Times Books, 381 pp., $25)

Lately, President Clinton seems to have done a good bit of reading. Early this fall he had a highly publicized confessional with Ben Wattenberg about the latter's book, *Values Matter Most.* And in September, at a meeting with religious leaders in the White House, he recommended another book to the ministers and the assembled press corps. He lavished praise on a "fascinating book by a man named Benjamin Barber," called *Jihad vs. McWorld.* Worried that he might have given offense to somebody, he quickly added that "it's not an anti-Muslim book, by the way. Islam is a beautiful religion with great values."

Benjamin Barber is a professor of political philosophy at Rutgers University who has often written on big subjects. He is best known for his advocacy of "strong democracy." His book of that name, which appeared in 1984, was an argument for unmediated democratic politics. It advocated greater participation of all citizens in all aspects of social and political life; criticized communitarianism for its intolerance of individual choice and autonomy; and extolled civic education. But the book's animating purpose was an attack on America's distinctive political theory, liberal constitutionalism. As developed perhaps most importantly by James Madison, liberal constitutionalism seeks to tame the passions of direct democracy through various mediating mechanisms—delegated powers, deliberative representation, federal structures, and so on. For Barber, this was thinly veiled oligarchy. He rejected the very notion of mediation, dismissing—in the tradition of the American pragmatists John Dewey and Charles Pierce—all knowledge not grounded in experience. Again and again he quoted Rousseau's cry, "Once a people permits itself to be represented, it is no longer free."

Barber's new book could be read as a continuation of these themes. It, too, is deeply concerned about the fate of democracy. It, too, is littered with approving references to participation, civic education and (that most trendy Eden of all) civil society. It, too, quotes Rousseau often. On closer reading, however, *Jihad vs. McWorld* is a wholesale refutation, unacknowledged or unwitting, of Barber's longstanding public philosophy. The most interesting and original parts of the new book comprise, at heart, a diatribe against the effects of unchecked participation by the masses.

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More importantly, the book reflects a certain kind of unyielding leftism's final argument against the rise of liberal democratic capitalism. With political and economic critiques exhausted, what remains is an aesthetic case against capitalism, a strange exercise in the politics of taste.

The starting point of Barber's book is reasonable enough: the simultaneous rise of economic globalization and communal loyalties threaten the nation-state, from above and from below. Barber goes on to link the fate of the nation-state to the fate of democracy, which is his chief concern. "The modern nation-state has actually acted as a cultural integrator and has adapted well to pluralist ideas: civic ideologies and constitutional faiths around which their many clans and tribes can rally." If the state gets overwhelmed in its struggle with "Jihad" and "McWorld," Barber argues, our "post-industrial, post-national ... [epoch] is likely also to be terminally postdemocratic."

Thus the book has two villains, who are the infelicitous entities of its title. "Jihad" is a metaphor, referring here not simply to the Islamic idea of a holy war, but to "dogmatic and violent particularism of a kind known to Christians no less than Muslims, to Germans and Hindis [sic] as well as to Arabs." Barber does discuss Islam, but he betrays more prejudice than knowledge. He seems to equate Islam with the Arabs (as the quotation above implies), imputing that region's political dysfunctions to that religion. The reader of Barber's book would not know, for example, that the four largest Muslim populations in the world are all outside the Middle East—in Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Islam is a monolith, according to Barber, and one that is intrinsically inhospitable to democracy and "nurtures conditions favorable to parochialism, antimodernism, exclusiveness, and hostility to 'others.'" I guess Clinton didn't get to this part of the book.

Barber is quite ambivalent about nationalism. (And it is odd that he discusses nationalism in the context of "Jihad".) He recognizes nationalism's historical role in giving people a sense of belonging and self-determination. He scorns people who "use nationalism as a scathing pejorative," thus distorting "a far more dialectical concept." Yet he himself uses a crude, xenophobic and inaccurate term to describe this complex phenomenon. What on earth does "Jihad" have to do with the mood that he discerns in Occitan France, Spanish Catalonia, French Canada and German Switzerland?

Mercifully, the discussion of "Jihad" is short: a mere fifty of the book's 300 pages. This is partly because bashing "Jihad" isn't complicated. It does not take long to convince people in the West today that communal militancy is bad and a danger for democracy. But the real reason for the brevity of Barber's analysis of "Jihad" is that he seems to have decided that it is not really the problem after all. "Jihad" is simply a frightened reaction to the onslaught of "McWorld." It "tends the soul that McWorld abjures and strives for the moral well-being that McWorld ... disdains." It becomes clear now that Barber's real enemy, his real obsession, is "McWorld."

Barber's discussion of "McWorld" is tough going. It is written in the breathless style of a futurologist, complete with invented words and obscure logic. Chapter four, for example, concludes: "This infotainment telesector is supported by hard goods, which in fact have soft entailments that help obliterate the hard/soft distinction itself." The book is studded with impressive-sounding, hollow lines such as this one: "The dynamics of the Jihad-McWorld linkage are deeply dialectical."

Barber makes several arguments in the sections on "McWorld," not all of them consistent. "McWorld" itself is, variously, the global market, multinational business, rampant consumerism and global pop culture. Barber sometimes speaks in the gloomy tones of the declinists, suggesting that America barely survived the cold war, and then only by taking on a crippling national debt. Other times he speaks of an America poised to dominate the world economically and culturally. In some places he argues that the globalization of economics has created a world of multinational corporations that have no national character, but he also declares incessantly that "McWorld" is pervasively American—"'international' is just another way of saying global American...." So what, exactly, is the problem: a weakening America in the midst of a nationless world, or American global hegemony?

The expansion of the global marketplace and its consequences is an important subject. It has spawned vigorous debates among political scientists and economists for decades. Which is to say, it is not as novel as Barber or some of the wide-eyed management consultants he cites think. The power of multinationals, for example, is not exactly a new phenomenon. India was colonized, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not by a country but by a multinational corporation, the British East India Company, which wielded financial, political and military powers that no modern-day corporation could ever have. Imagine Coca-Cola with its own army, its own courts, its own laws.

Scholarly studies with careful collections of data abound on topics such as foreign direct investment, home country controls and outsourcing—all of which complicate the simple picture of nation-states in decline in the face of global markets. International financial markets function smoothly, for example, owing to an elaborate regulatory structure created and sustained by national governments; but Barber pays little attention to such matters, filling his pages instead with a blizzard of anecdotes taken from the pages of newspapers and magazines. Many of his assertions about the frightening power of "McWorld" and its relentless thrust across the globe are supported by the evidence of ... advertisements. Ralph Lauren's "Living Without Space" campaign to sell Safari perfume and Reebok's "Planet Reebok" theme are illustrations of how "advertising colonizes space." By this method, I suppose, the gooey 1980s song "We Are the World" is proof of a new imperialism, with Quincy Jones its mastermind. In fact, pop music does worry Barber. In a chapter on MTV called "McWorld's Noisy Soul" there is an ominous two-page world map, reminiscent of the geopolitical primers of yore, that shows most of the globe shaded in grey. It turns out that all these countries receive music television. Where is Samuel Huntington when you need him?

Amid the din, however, one note can be heard throughout Barber's discussion: a distaste for "McWorld" in all its manifestations. Barber clearly abhors McDonalds, the evil empire itself, with its day-glo arches, plastic decor, factory food and tacky advertising. And McDonalds is merely the symbol for all large, consumer-based multinationals such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nike, Reebok and Disney. Barber's vision is the sophisticated urbanite's suburban nightmare: "McWorld is an entertainment shopping experience that brings together malls, multiplex movie theaters, theme parks, spectator sports arenas, fast-food chains (with their endless movie tie-ins), and television (with its burgeoning shopping networks) into a single vast enterprise...."

Barber hates the fact that the global consumer companies are destroying the delightful and quaint and individual cul-

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tures that one expects to see when one travels abroad. And the sinister new globalism has even hit France, the country he cherishes most. In the good old days, Barber lovingly recounts, "one ate nonpasteurised Brie and drank *vin de Provence* in cafés and brasseries that were archetypically French; one listened to Edith Piaf and Jacqueline Françoise on French national radio stations and drove 2CV Citroens and Renault sedans without ever leaving French roadways.... An American in Paris crossed the waters to get away from TasteeFreez, White Castle and Chevrolet pickup trucks and once in France could be certain they would vanish...." It is a novel objection to imperialism that it is ruining tourism.

I like many of the things that Barber likes—neighborhood stores, bistros, good food, good wine—but I try not to confuse my tastes with my politics. Barber misunderstands the phenomenon that he deplores. McDonalds and Coca-Cola and Nike and Disney have become so dominant because during the last hundred years, and especially during the last forty years, the industrialized world has seen a staggering rise in the standard of living of the average person. This means that vast numbers of people now have the time and the money to indulge in what used to be upper-class styles of life and leisure, most notably eating out and shopping. True, they eat and shop at places that Barber would not, but surely that is not the point.

The explosion of wealth and the rise of living standards, in what the Marxist historian E.J. Hobsbawm has called capitalism's "golden age," is among the most important social transformations in history. After thousands of years, more than a tiny percent of the population of these countries have some degree of material well-being. The recent debate over the very real problem of stagnating wages has made us forget how far we have come. A half century of peace and economic growth has created a new revolution of rising expectations. The average American family now consumes twice as many goods and services as in 1950. Then, less than 10 percent of Americans went to college; now, almost 60 percent do. The poorest fifth of the population of the United States consumes more today than the middle fifth did in 1955.

It is easy to demean the rise of mass consumption, as Barber does, mocking the individual "choice" that is reflected in the range of toppings on a baked potato or the variety of cereals

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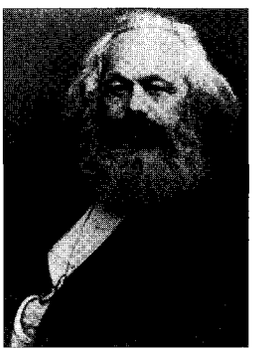

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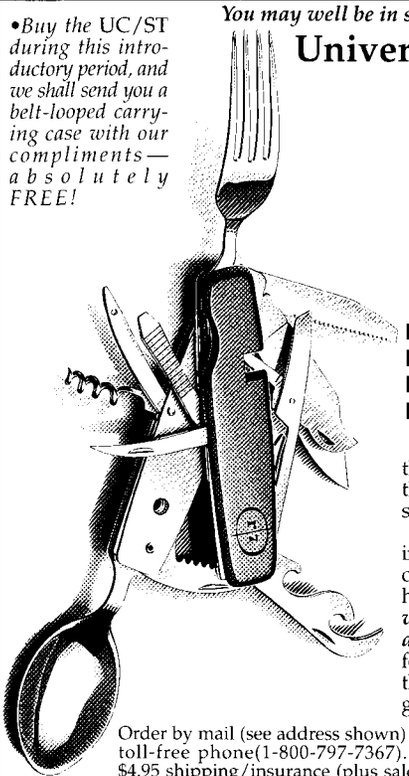

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in a supermarket. But this trivializes a remarkable phenomenon. Rising standards of living mean rising levels of hygiene, health and comfort. John Kenneth Galbraith, hardly a free-market ideologue, explained in 1967 that "no hungry man who is also sober can be persuaded to use his last dollar for anything but food. But a well-fed, well-clad, well-sheltered and otherwise well-tended person can be persuaded as between an electric razor and an electric toothbrush." When a middle-class person thinks of a house today, it has two bathrooms with heat and air conditioning in every room. This would have been considered prohibitively luxurious in 1950. Even measuring from 1973, when real wages began stagnating, standards of living have kept moving up. And the benefits are not mainly in the variety of cereal brands available. The number of cases of measles in America in 1974 was 22,094; it is now 312. A rising standard of living is not a form of corruption. It often represents an increase in the dignity of daily life.

McDonalds does look tawdry when compared to a Parisian bistro, but most of the customers at McDonalds, even at McDonalds in Paris, probably did not eat much in bistros before cheap fast-food restaurants appeared. Two generations ago, eating out was a luxury; today the average American eats out four times a week. (A weekly Big Mac is a fine expression of family values.) McDonalds and its look-alikes became successful because they offered ordinary people the convenience of eating out often and cheaply in sanitary (OK, antiseptic) conditions. And the rise of fast food has not exactly brought about the demise of fine dining. The world Barber likes is alive and well, but it is no longer central to society. Madonna looms larger in the general culture than Jessye Norman because more people listen to her sing; and in a democratic society it matters more how many listen than who listens. Indeed, *Jihad vs. McWorld* can be read as a compendium of the social changes that a rising middle class has wrought on national cultures that were heretofore shaped by upper-class rituals and symbols.

A large part of Barber's discomfort with "McWorld" seems to stem from his discomfort with capitalism. This shows itself in two interesting ways. First, he litters his book with the usual paeans to civil society, by which he (like everyone else) means not all private groups, but the private groups he likes. Thus, conspicuously absent from his account of civil society are private firms. In fact, he sees corporations as actively hostile to civil society. "Who will get the private sector off the backs of civil society?"

As a professor of political theory, Barber must know that the concept of civil society emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century in part to describe private business activity. From Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith to Bernard Mandeville and David Hume, the philosophers who developed this idea spoke of the unintended good to society that results from selfish economic activity. In Mandeville's famous phrase, "private vice is public virtue." And leaving aside the matter of intellectual pedigree, how can one speak about organizations that provide individuals with personal autonomy and personal dignity, and shield them from the whims of the state, without mentioning private enterprise?

Second, individual choice that is exercised in a private economic sphere is, for Barber, somehow false. He celebrates the average person's hasty choice at the ballot box as genuine, but he scorns the careful decisions that the same person makes about where to work and live, what house or car to buy. These latter decisions, he implies, are forced on the unsuspecting consumer by omnipotent corporations. His book is sprinkled with calls for "real choice" and "genuine choice," but this is patronizing and unconvincing; he really means *choices like his.* The truth is that companies usually succeed when they cater to people's choices; and when they try to create people's choices, they often fail. Remember New Coke? Barber has his own nightmare backwards: it is the people of France, not the evil multinationals, who are abandoning French culture. If more Frenchmen ate in bistros and watched Louis Malle than eat at McDonalds and watch Arnold Schwarzenegger, there would be no slippage of French culture.

There is no denying that "McWorld" is not a pretty sight. The rise of a mass consumption society produces political, economic and cultural side effects that are troubling. But surely the criticism of this world, and of the liberal capitalism which created it, must first recognize its accomplishments. The political and economic changes that have created McWorld are, on the whole, admirable ones. Giving people the ability to live longer, to move where they want, own a house, to enjoy such pleasures as vacations and restaurants and shopping is good, even noble. And there is something distinctly unbecoming about an American intellectual disparaging the spread of American blandishments across the world. We like higher standards of living for ourselves, but we worry about their effects on others.

It is particularly strange to find that Barber, a man of the left, is so worried. After all, the left has been in favor of the goal of rising standards of living for the average person for centuries. In the pursuit of this goal it often made serious arguments against capitalism, questioning whether it was the right path. Some of these criticisms have proven wrong. (Communism, Lenin explained, would outproduce capitalism.) And some of these criticisms—relating to, say, income inequality—are important questions to this day. But Barber's book reflects a stubborn kind of leftism that has despaired of political and economic argument and, as a last resort, takes refuge in an aesthetic criticism of the market. This is the same leftism that produced Norman Mailer's one specific political position: tax plastic.

Barber's own work has been filled with paeans to ordinary people. He has championed measures that would give them greater autonomy and freedom of choice. But now that he is confronted by "the people's" actual—that is to say, tacky—choices, Barber wants them to choose differently. Indeed, he seems to desire what he has always denounced: elites, and the mediating institutions that try to cushion society from the direct effects of democracy while at the same time working to elevate people's judgments. Maybe Barber has discovered that there is something to be said, after all, for cultural leadership, for constraints on individual choice.

Sixty-three years ago, Ortega y Gasset, in *The Revolt of the Masses*, made a more intellectually honest argument against democratic capitalism, against the consequences of rampant and unfettered choice. He spoke directly to the Barbers of his time. "You want the ordinary man to be master," he wrote. "Well, do not be surprised if he acts for himself, if he demands all form of enjoyment, if he firmly asserts his will ... if he considers his own person and his own leisure, if he is careful as to dress.... Was it not this that it was hoped to do, namely, that the average man should feel himself master, lord and ruler of himself and of his life? Well, that is now accomplished. Why then these complaints of the liberals, the democrats, the progressives of thirty years ago? Or is it that like children they want something, but not the consequences of that something?"

FAREED ZAKARIA is managing editor of *Foreign Affairs.*

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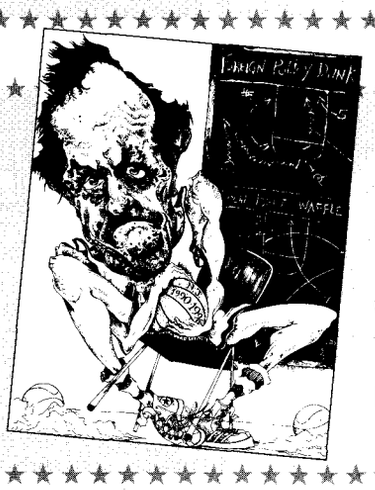

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Hush Hush, Sweet Charlotte

BY TERRY CASTLE

The Brontës by Juliet Barker

(St. Martin's Press, 1,003 pp., $35)

In the recently published letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf, there is an entertaining missive from 1927 in which Vita, recovering from a Christmas flu, describes a "delightful" dream induced by aspirin:

> I dreamt that I dined with Eddy [Sackville-West], a party consisting of Eddy, Charlotte Brontë, you, and me. Eddy seemed vexed and anxious, and after dinner took me aside to say, 'Vita, you must find me very attractive to put up with such a dull party on my account?'

The silliness of the dream is mighty, of course: the campy Eddy, Vita's cousin, was homosexual and hardly contending for her passions; the flamboyant Vita, besides, was having an affair with Woolf. But the crowning absurdity, of course, is Brontë—whose bizarre materialization in the midst of a Bloomsbury dinner party makes one want to laugh aloud. That such an evening might be "dull"—Woolf and Brontë together!—seems patently ludicrous.

From another angle, though, it's a sad business, all this Charlotte-longing. For that is what Sackville-West's dream is also about: bringing back—and feeding and reviving and making glad—the saddest, hungriest, most appallingly *deceased* woman in English literature. For who doesn't feel sympathy for Charlotte Brontë? Ever since the publication of Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857, two years after Brontë's death at 38, the elements of her story have been all too familiar: the motherless childhood at the bleak parsonage at Haworth on the Yorkshire moors; the stern, reclusive, half-mad clergyman-father; the semi-starvation at the Cowan Bridge School for Clergymen's Daughters (model for the ghastly Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*); the deaths of her two elder sisters from consumption in 1825; the lonely sojourn in Brussels and unrequited love for a married man; the stagnant, empty years as a schoolteacher and governess; the alcohol-sodden death of her feckless brother, Branwell, in 1848; the deaths of her sisters Emily and Anne, their literary dreams mostly unrealized, only a few months later; her own brief fame as a novelist cut short by illness and depression and an agonizing death during pregnancy—less than a year after her marriage to her father's curate—just when happiness seemed at last within reach.

What makes Charlotte Brontë's story all the more heartbreaking is how close she came to escaping it all—to fleeing Haworth and the death-in-life it represented. Reading Juliet Barker's monumental biography of the Brontës—surely the most exhaustive, thoughtful and profoundly researched book anyone has ever written about the family—the most exhilarating passages are those in which Barker, like Gaskell before her, describes Brontë's brief taste of freedom after the spectacular success of *Jane Eyre* in 1847. As Brontë's identity gradually became known to the public—she had submitted her novel under the masculine pseudonym "Currer Bell" and not even her publishers, Smith, Elder & Co., knew who she was until some months after its appearance—a new world seemed miraculously to open up for her: trips to London, parties in her honor, the acclaim of the rich and famous, and best of all, the approbation of literary idols such as Thackeray, Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, G.H. Lewes and Leigh Hunt.

For a moment Vita's dream doesn't seem so farfetched, or the world of Bloomsbury dinner parties so far away. We, too, find ourselves fantasizing: had Branwell not languished and died, had Emily and Anne not fallen prey to the terrible family curse of consumption, had Brontë herself not felt obliged to return to her ailing yet resilient father in Yorkshire (outliving his wife and five other children, he would outlive her by six years), we can easily see her moving across the decades—vibrant, enriched, increasingly cosmopolitan, a marvel of rebound and rehabilitation—to the very edge of the twentieth century.

It is no wonder that Brontë inhabits the dream life of modern women writers. She comes so close, only to fall back, irretrievably, into family and death and the past. One wants to save her from Fate itself. "It is strange to reflect," wrote Virginia Woolf on the centenary of Brontë's birth in 1916, "what a different image we might have of her if her life had been a long one":

> She might have become, like other writers who were her contemporaries, a figure familiarly met with in London and elsewhere, the subject of anecdotes and pictures innumerable, removed from us well within the memory of the middle-aged, in all the splendour of established fame. But it is not so. When we think of her we have to imagine someone who had no lot in our modern world; we have to cast our minds back to the fifties of the last century, to a remote parsonage upon the wild Yorkshire moors. Very few now are those who saw her and spoke to her; and her posthumous reputation has not been prolonged by any circle of friends whose memories so often keep alive for a new generation the most vivid and most perishable characteristics of a dead man.

In the absence of such contacts, Woolf says, one can only turn back to the astonishing, rebarbative, strangely consoling novels—each one "a superb gesture of defiance, bidding her torturers depart and leave her queen of a splendid island of imagination."

It will come as a shock to Brontë's many admirers to find Juliet Barker's biography so resistant to this peculiar and abiding pathos. Indeed, the book is revisionism on a grand scale. Not only does Barker wish to shift attention away from the author of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* back toward the other Brontës—this, more than any previous Brontë book, is intended as a family portrait—she also wishes to rearrange our sympathies: to undo what she sees as the distorting effects of the "poor Charlotte" school of biography so skillfully propagated by Gaskell and her successors. As Barker announces in a brisk introduction, a chief goal of her 1,000-page work is to dismantle the popular perception of Brontë as "the longsuffering victim of duty, subordinating her career as a writer to the demands of her selfish and autocratic father." Instead, we are to see her no better or worse, no more a victim of Fate, than her equally pitiable parent or siblings.

In purely practical terms the task is an ambitious one, if only because so much surviving Brontë material is so Charlotte-centered. It is not simply that she left more in the way of manuscript material and correspondence than anyone else in her family, or that Gaskell—as Woolf observed—has indeed "stamped our minds with an ineffaceable impression" of her.

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Her writings themselves seem to assert her preeminence. Unlike the novels of Emily and Anne, which can seem strangely dissociated from the little we know about their authors' personalities—*Wuthering Heights* has the stark, autonomous quality of myth—Charlotte's novels have a fiercely intimate, self-dramatizing feel.

Both *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* are fraught, claustrophobic first-person narratives; the thematic links with Brontë's own life (exile, loneliness, poverty, sexual longing) are obvious. Yet even the more spacious *Shirley*, set in rural Yorkshire against the backdrop of the Luddite rebellions of 1811-12, seems to allegorize its author's state of mind. In the excruciating rendering of the nearly book-long melancholia of its heroine Caroline Helstone, Brontë gives one of the most vividly personal accounts of chronic inward sadness since Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* or the journals of Cowper. No wonder biographers since Gaskell have fallen under her spell.

Despite these obstacles, Barker, it must be said, comes close to achieving her goal—at least in the first, more limited part of her endeavor. A one-time curator of the Brontë Parsonage Museum at Haworth, she has turned up masses of new Brontë material, particularly having to do with Patrick Brontë, the much-maligned father, Branwell the ill-fated brother, and Anne, the youngest of the siblings. (She is less successful with Maria Brontë, the dead mother, and with the elusive Emily, who remains, Barker admits, largely a cipher.) She has been ingenious in seeking out new sources of information about the lesser-known members of the family.

Astonishing though it may seem, Barker is the first biographer to read systematically through contemporary Yorkshire newspapers such as the *Halifax Guardian* or *Bradford Observer*, despite the fact that Patrick Brontë is known to have corresponded regularly with several of them. Uncovering his contributions, she is able to demonstrate that far from being the brooding madman of legend, shut up in his study while his motherless children wandered the moors, he was in fact deeply involved in local political and religious affairs, an energetic reformer on behalf of the poor, and, ironically—given the legend that the family tuberculosis was the result of drinking water contaminated by the fetid runoff from the graveyard next to the Haworth parsonage—an agitator on behalf of public sanitation and a safe water supply.

But Barker has also returned to neglected private sources, with similarly illuminating findings. Her thorough rereading of the juvenilia—in childhood and adolescence the younger Brontës jointly produced a phantasmagoric trove of stories about two imaginary kingdoms known as Angria and Gondal—prompts a re-evaluation, in particular, of Branwell's thwarted talents: Barker is convinced that he originated much of the so-called Angrian material and could have been as significant a writer in adulthood as any of his sisters had he lived. Perusing the school essays that Charlotte and Emily wrote during their sojourn in Brussels for the formidable Constantin Heger—the married teacher with whom Charlotte fell in love and later memorialized as M. Paul in *Villette*—Barker finds fascinating insights into each sister's personality and (in Charlotte's case) the evolution of her literary style. And having trawled through hundreds of forgotten letters, diaries and notebooks, Barker is able to shed light on a number of misunderstood or misrepresented matters: the development of Branwell's alcoholism, the identity of the illegitimate child he fathered in 1840, the nature of the religious crises experienced by Anne Brontë in 1837 and 1849, Charlotte's infatuation with her publisher George Smith.

The result of such sleuthing is unquestionably the most detailed account ever of the month-by-month—and in some cases day-by-day—activities of the Brontë clan. One suspects that Barker has learned a great deal from the extraordinary, even visionary biographical techniques developed over the past decade by Richard Holmes. As in Holmes's remarkable studies of Coleridge and Shelley, or his recent double portrait *Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage*, there is a phenomenological density about *The Brontës*—a wealth of recovered sensuous detail—that brings the departed world of its subjects alive in an almost kinesthetic fashion. Whether she is describing the bell-ringing competitions held in Haworth Church, the Brontës' dogs and cats, or the consternation caused by the explosion of a local bog in 1824, Barker exhibits, like Holmes, a visceral alertness to the way in which the so-called background experiences of life shape private and collective awareness.

This alertness can make for moments of exquisite biographical empathy—as when she notices, for example, that the fatal illness of the Brontës' mother, Maria, in August 1821 coincided with the death of Queen Caroline, the much-loved wife of George IV. For the Brontë children and their grief-stricken father the timing could not have been worse:

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"the paraphernalia of public mourning were everywhere to be seen and even Patrick's pulpit had to be draped in funereal black as if in preparation for the death that had to come." Later, describing Patrick's removal of the parsonage piano from the parlor into an unused upstairs bedroom after the deaths of Branwell, Emily and Anne—an act that irritated Charlotte, who thought its absence added to the sepulchral gloom of the house—Barker is no doubt correct to see "that the presence of the silent piano in the room where Patrick spent most of his time must have been a painful daily reminder of his three children who had all loved to play it."

But when it comes to Barker's other goal—the demythologizing of Charlotte—the biographer cannot be said to succeed. The problem is in part one of clashing temperaments: Brontë is precisely the sort of person a scholar as meticulous as Barker might be expected to dislike. Brontë herself could never have written a 1,000-page biography. Her recklessness, her anger, her impatient aversion to anything or anyone contravening her own passionate vision of life inevitably disqualified her for any career other than the one she chose: that of genius. The creator of *Jane Eyre* was not fastidious or painstaking or fair. She was only great.

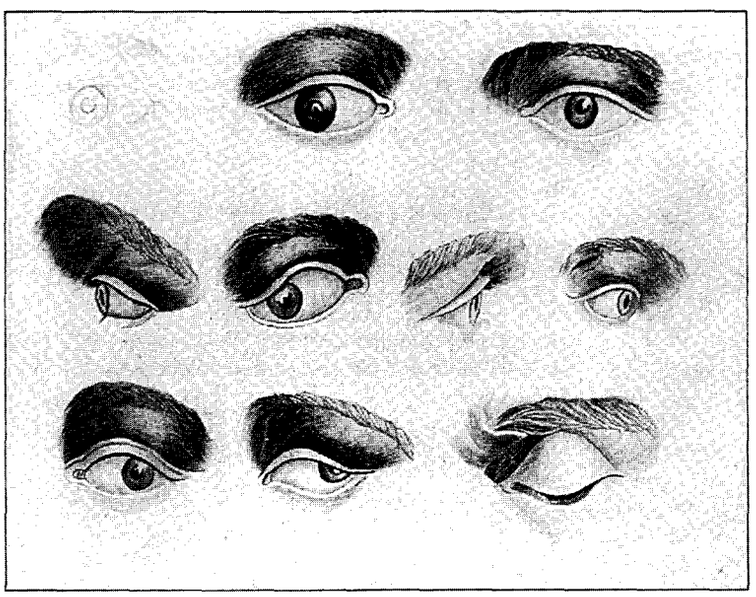
But Barker, too, has her limitations. Her disaffection for Brontë's magnificently troubled personality results in its own kind of unfairness—manifest at times in the crudest anti-Charlottism. Massively articulated though the biography is, its emotional subtext can be boiled down to a single issue: Was it right for Charlotte to rebel? For rebel she did—by despising Haworth, by yearning for an education and economic independence, by loving the wrong people, and above all by writing. Writing for Brontë was a form of metaphysical complaint. Her novels are complaints in the sense that Sophocles's plays or the Book of Job are complaints—not niggling or negative, but cries of rage directed at evil gods who murder souls. The savage indictment in *Jane Eyre* of Lowood School—that vile substation of hell where children inhale their death at every breath and the adults cannot be bothered to look in on them—is simply the first of Brontë's many salvos against the satanism of everyday life.

Barker consistently disparages these acts of resistance. In the process she drains Brontë's life of any moral dimension. Brontë's heroic intransigence is recast as so much grumbling and selfishness; her dark perception of human life as masochism and hysteria. A petty judgmentalism, a kind of Head Girl goody-goodyism, seems to overtake Barker whenever she feels obliged to comment on Brontë's inner life. Brontë is invariably in the wrong. Thus her desperate push to improve her own and her family's lot by going abroad to study in Belgium—she took Emily with her so that the two of them might learn enough French and German to open a school of their own and thereby relieve the strain on their father's small income—is described as "ruthless" and "an entirely selfish pursuit of learning." Her dislike of the ill-paid, exhausting task of governessing (she wrote in disgust to her friend Ellen Nussey that not only was she supposed to teach her infant charges, "but wipe the children's smutty noses or tie their shoes or fetch their pinafores or set them a chair") is attributed to her "snobbishness" and "recalcitrance." ("Charlotte's attitude," Barker calmly reports later, "alone had been responsible for her unhappiness as a private governess.") Elsewhere she is described as "sour," "jaundiced," "venomous," "wallowing in self-pity" or pathologically "jealous"—as when she complains to Nussey that one of her father's curates, William Weightman, is flirting rather heartlessly with several Haworth young ladies and intends to marry none of them.

In the symbolic battle of fathers and daughters, Barker inevitably sides with the fathers. The desire to humanize Patrick Brontë may be a laudable one, but Barker's special pleading on his behalf—against Charlotte—borders at times on the grotesque. Though hardly the ogre of repute, Patrick Brontë was not a particularly easy or empathetic man: his fundamentalist religion made him cold, unimaginative, repressive. (In 1816, in a didactic book for children, he excoriated the "sensual novelist and his admirer" as "beings of depraved appetites and sickly imaginations," and on another occasion he cut up one of his wife's dresses because he disapproved of the cut of the sleeves.) And he could be childish in the extreme. He refused to attend Charlotte's wedding to his curate, Arthur Bell Nichols, out of senile rage at her for discomposing his household.

Yet Barker gives him the benefit of the doubt at every turn. The decision to send his daughters to the Cowan Bridge school (Branwell was allowed to stay at home) is supposedly explained away by the fact that the school had wealthy patrons who had been friendly to him, and that he had no knowledge of the conditions there. We are advised to take Charlotte's attack on the school in her fiction as a piece of embittered exaggeration after the fact: "Lowood [Cowan Bridge] is seen through the eyes of the child suffering there, not the dispassionate adult." As if to model how a dispassionate adult might better understand matters, Barker then lays out, like one of Swift's Laputan scientists, some reassuring statistical information showing that, yes, a number of girls indeed died of typhoid and consumption there every year from the miserable treatment, but there were other schools in England at the time where even more died.

Gaskell, who knew Charlotte well, is traduced because she supported Charlotte over her father. Lambasting the hostile portrait of Patrick in the *Life of Charlotte Brontë*—Gaskell reported that he seldom allowed his children meat at their meals and would terrify them by firing guns off out the parsonage windows—Barker blames Gaskell for listening too readily to malicious rumors spread by a one-time Brontë nurse. (The nurse in question had described the Brontë children as "spiritless" and "noiseless" and "different to any children I had ever seen.") Barker suggests that the nurse was dismissed under a



Courtesy Brontë Parsonage Museum

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, *STUDY OF EYES*, 1831

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cloud, thus explaining the negative comments. But the only evidence educed in support of this theory is a passing and rather inconclusive comment made by the Brontë family cook—who would have had her own reasons for not wanting people to think the Brontës had grown up half-starved—many years later. "Perhaps, like Mrs. Gamp," Barker then goes on to fantasize, "[the nurse] had helped herself too frequently to the beer which Aunt Branwell kept under lock and key in the cellar." And what begins as speculation soon becomes accepted truth: several hundred pages on, Barker refers to the "sacked nurse" (who surely tippled) as the source of all stories about Patrick's peculiarities. Left out entirely is the possibility that Charlotte might have told Gaskell herself about her father during the visits she paid to her fellow novelist in the early 1850s—or that the stories might have been true.

Perhaps the most gothic of Barker's anti-Charlottisms is her contention that Charlotte destroyed the manuscript of a second novel left by Emily after her death. That such a manuscript existed, even Barker admits, is questionable. The only evidence that it may have is a letter to Emily from her publisher in 1848, in which he says merely he would "have great pleasure in making arrangements for your next novel." Yet the same publisher had notoriously confused Emily with Anne in an advertisement the previous month, and may have been referring to Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, then in progress. No extant Brontë diary or notebook refers to Emily working on another novel after *Wuthering Heights*.

Undaunted, however, Barker elaborates the theory that Charlotte found her sister's manuscript and—out of pique or high-handedness—consigned it to the flames. As a theory this is marginally allowable. Charlotte *was* concerned that Emily's reputation not suffer after her death, and an inferior work might have challenged the public's view of her as a budding genius cut off in her prime. But what disturbs, again, is the way Barker's theory so quickly hardens into fact. Describing Charlotte's reluctance later to let certain unpublished poems by Emily appear in a posthumous edition of *Wuthering Heights*—on the grounds that her sister had not thought them worthy of inclusion in the book of poems the three sisters had published jointly as "Currer," "Ellis" and "Acton Bell" in 1846—Barker darkly connects this hesitation with "what happened to Emily's second novel."

Her superb research notwithstanding, Barker's achievement is marred by what one could call a piety about piety. It has become fashionable lately to praise the pious and damn the naysayers; and Barker has predictably harsh words for those "feminists" who have blamed "the men in [Charlotte's] life" for holding her back and possibly stunting her talent. As a fine old Christian gentleman, she suggests, Patrick Brontë deserves our sympathy. At the same time, she argues, Charlotte herself was fatally lacking in piety. Had she accepted her lot as meekly as her sister Anne did, had she performed her duties as daughter and woman with a little more enthusiasm and esprit de corps, much of her suffering—her biographer thinks—might have been avoided.

This may be true, but it also misses the point. Charlotte Brontë was not a saint; few people of her extraordinary talent are. It might seem anachronistic, as well as peculiar, to connect Charlotte Brontë with Ludwig Wittgenstein, but the comparison may be instructive. Both were the products of—and at odds with—strange, charismatic families. Both were schoolteachers who hated teaching. (It is one of the great myths of the pious that everyone should enjoy teaching the young and that those who don't are morally defective.) Both were critical and charmless and miserable most of the time. And both were geniuses of the first rank. A recent biographer of Wittgenstein appositely subtitled his book "The Duty of Genius," to convey the idea that for Wittgenstein there was something beyond the performance of conventional virtues. Though female, poor and shell-shocked by loss—Gaskell spoke of her "constitutional absence of hope"—Charlotte Brontë, too, recognized the duty of genius. That is why we care about her.

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They'll Take Manhattan

BY MARK POLIZZOTTI

Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School by Martica Sawin

(MIT Press, 466 pp., $45)

As rival seats of twentieth-century culture, Paris and New York have long maintained an uneasy bond forged by admiration, curiosity and envy. While some of their flourishings have managed to travel between continents without spoilage, others were so conditioned by place that they inevitably began to wilt in a different climate. To a large extent, this latter claim could be made of the Surrealist movement, which, though it inspired offshoots the world over, was firmly rooted in the Paris pavement—in no small part because its founder, André Breton, deemed life anywhere else to be "artificial, like a stage set." History would have its say, however, and the German invasions of 1939-40 inspired a tide of emigration that pushed not only these homebound avant-gardists, but also the very locus of artistic innovation, durably westward.

Martica Sawin's book gives a close-up account of how that great wartime exodus, which brought Breton, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, André Masson and others to these shores, impacted on a generation of American artists, and how this impact drastically changed our notion of what art is. Although the story of Surrealism has been told many times before, this is only the second book I know (coming hard on the heels of Dickran Tashjian's *A Boatload of Madmen*, published early last year) to focus primarily on the traumatic yet remarkably fertile period between 1940 and 1945. Along the way, Sawin laudably proposes to dispel some of our lingering myths about Surrealism—that it was all about soft watches and kooky behavior; that it was one more artistic and literary school of the '20s—and to draw our attention to its indispensable historical and philosophical underpinnings. Sawin has a deep knowledge of the times, along with an abiding passion for her subject and, clearly, the best of intentions. But while *Surrealism in Exile* lays out a vast store of interesting information, it ultimately risks only adding to the confusion.

Much of this confusion stems from Surrealism's narrow identification with art—an identification that Sawin, while

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she recognizes its limitations, seems tacitly to endorse. At its origins, however, the movement's stated goals were scientific, or at least psychological, much more than they were aesthetic. It is no accident that when Breton, a poet and ex-medical student, first defined "Surrealism" in 1922, he made the term virtually synonymous with written and verbal automatism. An early proponent of Freud, Breton saw automatic writing as a gateway back to a vital, liberating and fundamentally linguistic substratum which, though shared by everyone, had long ago been buried over by the conventionality of everyday discourse. "Doesn't the mediocrity of our universe stem essentially from our powers of enunciation?" he asked at around that time. Visual art was considered only another form that the expression of this substratum could take, and hardly the most important form at that.

Underlying this approach to language and art was a hugely ambitious (one might say grandiose) aim: to refashion Western European society—to use literature, in Rimbaud's much-cited phrase, in order to "change life." The future Surrealists had emerged from World War I horrified, though one could argue that it was less by the carnage (which few of them witnessed firsthand) than by the nationalistic fervor that encouraged it. To their minds, it was not only Western politics that had allowed such "blood, mud, and idiocy," to use Breton's phrase, but also the dominant models of Western philosophy, formed by centuries of Greco-Roman rationalism.

In search of less tainted models, they had joined in the aggressively senseless antics of Dada, plumbed the mind's illogical depths through automatic writing and trances and militated alongside the Communist Party, which they viewed as a pragmatic extension of their own iconoclasm. The common thread linking these and other activities was a will to replace the existing ideology with one that could better accommodate the marvels normally accessible only to children and dreamers. The "Surrealist revolution" (as one of their magazines was called) meant to be not just aesthetic, in other words, but global, a top-to-bottom refurbishing of "human understanding."

In crossing the Atlantic, however, Surrealism went from being a philosophy that used the instruments of art to an art movement that justified its productions with philosophy. Part of the problem has to do with translation: many of the Surrealists' writings simply defy adequate rendering into the American language or mentality. On top of which, thanks to the pioneering efforts of curators such as Julien Levy, Chick Austin and Alfred Barr, Surrealist works of art became known here well before Surrealist manifestoes, and it was these artworks that assumed the defining role on this side of the ocean. Meanwhile, owing to his highly publicized antics (such as crashing through Bonwit Teller's Fifth Avenue window in a bathtub), the painter Dalí was able to tell New York that he "was Surrealism" well before the staid poet Breton ever set foot on its streets. Although by then Dalí had been drummed out of the group, there is little wonder that for most Americans Surrealism still wears a handlebar mustache.

When the majority of Surrealists arrived in New York in 1941, after a harrowing but exhilarating winter in Marseille that Sawin nicely recounts, they landed on ground that was prepared and yet alien. Certainly, events such as the Wadsworth Atheneum retrospective of 1931 or MOMA's "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" exhibition of 1936 had helped to till the Northeastern soil. And more recently an advance guard of Surrealist painters, notably Tanguy, Matta, Kurt Seligmann and the Englishman Gordon Onslow Ford, had made contact with a number of American artists who had "outgrown the styles and the subjects of the 1930s."

Onslow Ford, for example, gave a series of well-attended lectures at the New School on "Surrealist Painting: an adventure into Human Consciousness" before an audience that included Robert Motherwell, Arshile Gorky and several future lights of the New York School. Matta held informal sessions, attended by many of the same figures, in which Surrealist ideas were introduced and debated. As one witness put it, the shock of these ideas had the Americans' eyes "popping out of their heads." Even those who didn't embrace Surrealism took from it a broadened sense of art's possibilities.

Still, it was not always a hospitable world that Surrealism encountered in New York. The sociological and geographical context that had supported it through nearly two decades had fallen away, making much of what Breton tried to organize here—such as the daily observance of café meetings—seem artificial and silly. Moreover, as Sawin points out, if some American artists were already experimenting with automatism, it was less as "an open sesame to the [collective] unconscious" than simply as "a way of getting into [one's own] painting." Over and over, the Surrealists' group orientation kept running up against Yankee self-reliance.

America was not always beneficial on personal grounds, either. Some of the émigrés were hampered by their inability to speak English, many of them lived in precarious financial straits, and more than a few suffered major emotional crises. Among those most affected by his sojourn was Breton: impervious to the native idiom, forced by poverty to work as a propaganda broadcaster, abandoned by his wife and young daughter for the sculptor David Hare, he found himself stranded in a strange land without language, funds or family. "I don't need to tell you how I feel about New York," its sites and its customs, Breton grumbled in a letter of the time to his friend Benjamin Péret. "I sometimes wonder if you were worse off in Rennes [prison] than I am pacing five or six times a day down Fifty-seventh Street" (although it was on practically that same block that Breton met his third wife, Elisa Claro—not "Varo," as Sawin dubs her—the following year).

Moreover, the country as a whole struck them as shallow and impersonal, a "land without myth," whereas in Breton's view it was precisely the "therapeutic and mind-expanding" myths of a given society that allowed that society to exist. Much of the Surrealist quest, in fact, had been aimed at mining their daily lives and surroundings for hidden mythic dimensions. As Sawin notes, however, the refugees' new surroundings

> lacked precisely that which gave resonance to the places from which they had come. Those sculptural and architectural icons that fulfilled the need for unifying symbols, the streets, buildings and squares resonant with the ever-present past, had few counterparts in the urban environments of the new world.

The Surrealists sought to compensate for this lack by founding new myths (such as the myth of the "Great Transparents," beings who surround humanity undetected by the five senses), or by studying the undervalued artifacts of the American Indians. And some looked toward the Western landscapes, the power of which dwarfed anything they had known back home. Nor were they alone, for the American artists had been feeling many of the same dissatisfactions and had similarly been looking for solutions.

But it is precisely in this shared quest that major distinctions must be drawn. If the Europeans sought renewal in the impersonal grandeur of the land or in the marginalized culture of the Hopis and Zuñis, the Americans looked primarily toward the Europeans them-

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selves. Neither side truly saw what it was staring at. The Surrealists used what they found here to reinforce the same modes of thinking that they brought with them. And the New Yorkers, in the final account, appear to have been impressed less by the Surrealists' overall message than by their strange and charismatic—but ultimately transient—personalities.

In any case, by 1944 the foreigners' welcome had worn thin, and Breton was sadly chalking up the American sojourn as a "resounding failure." Hostile reviews of what one critic dubbed the Surrealists' "artistic Coney Island" became more frequent, and even sympathetic American painters began turning away from the movement, recasting its precepts to suit their indigenous needs and emerging as prominent figures in their own right. Sawin pinpoints Jackson Pollock's first show, in November 1943, as the beginning of the end of Surrealism's influence abroad. And although Pollock himself had been marked by the Surrealists (Sawin gives a provocative glimpse of Masson and Ernst experimenting with drip painting several years before Pollock, though she doesn't much develop the point), it is clear that the children were growing up and leaving their elders behind. What they retained was a smattering of conceptual indices that over the next decade mutated into the hybrid called abstract expressionism. The primary figures of this style—Pollock, de Kooning, Motherwell, Baziotes, Rothko—could trace many of their breakthroughs directly back to Surrealism.

As for the Surrealists themselves, those who returned to Paris after 1945 found it far less welcoming than New York had been. What Sawin calls their "dramatic but unsuccessful attempt at a comeback" met with indifference, the French public having moved on to the postwar attractions of Existentialism and jazz. Besides, as *Time* magazine put it, "After the gas chambers, those heaps of bones and teeth and shoes and eyeglasses, what is there left for the poor Surrealists to shock us with?"

Martica Sawin recounts most of this, and much more besides, with zeal and erudition. She has clearly spent many years pondering these questions, and she knows how to appreciate the sources, published and unpublished, that she marshals in the service of her arguments. She has unearthed several caches of previously untapped correspondence, which alone would make this book of interest to scholars. And she has assembled an impressive iconography (all in black and white, unfortunately), which, added to a spirited design, makes *Surrealism in Exile* a handsome physical object—indeed, the kind of volume that the Surrealists themselves liked to produce but could rarely afford to.

At the same time, the book is undermined by some irritating flaws. Sawin is a competent writer, but not an elegant one. And she could have used a fact-checker: names are misspelled or given incorrectly and dates are occasionally fanciful. In addition, she has a tendency to overstate her case—whether in assessing the importance of the Breton/Trotsky joint manifesto of 1938 (not 1939, as she writes) or in highlighting the "premonitory nature" of the Surrealists' ominous prewar paintings: by the late 1930s, it didn't take a shaman to see war on the horizon. Even her scholarship, in many ways impeccable, shows curious gaps. Why, for instance, does Sawin quote only certain primary sources in English translation, as if unaware that many others in her bibliography (including Breton's seminal *Surrealism and Painting*) have long been available here as well?

Less fortunate still, given the outsized nature of the times and the personalities involved, are the author's failings as a storyteller. Too often the anecdotes that she relates are disjointed, making them difficult to follow or to savor. An example: when the German-born Max Ernst was arrested in France as an "enemy alien" in 1939, his lover, the painter Leonora Carrington, suffered a nervous collapse and was committed by her family to an insane asylum. She later managed to elude her guardians and, thanks to a romantically minded friend in the Mexican diplomatic corps, reached Lisbon, en route to America. Ernst, meanwhile, returned from prison to find her gone without a trace. He joined up with the Surrealists in Marseille, then, thanks to an equally romantically minded Peggy Guggenheim, headed for Lisbon as well—where he found himself unexpectedly reunited with his missing lover. By now, the two were inextricably bound to their benefactors, and could do little more than spend their days wistfully in each other's company, until Leonora finally moved to Mexico and out of Ernst's life forever. The story is pure *Casablanca*, and, more to the point, it sheds light on many of the haunted, desolate paintings that Ernst produced during this period. But Sawin's telling of it is so spare that it winds up having little resonance or drama.

On the other hand, there are quite a number of matters that Sawin recounts to a fault. It takes over one-third of the book for the principals even to reach

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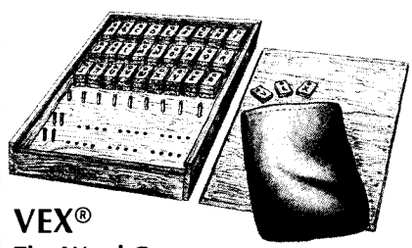

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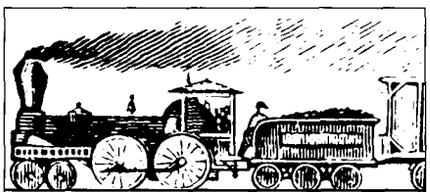

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New York, having first to wend their way through an excessively detailed recap of the prewar years. Once they arrive, their stories (not to mention that of the New York School's origins) get bogged down in tangents, asides, musings aloud, press clippings for every minor exhibit, analyses of minor paintings—as well as a long chapter on Mexico that, while interesting enough, seems to belong to another book entirely. I could not shake the feeling that whole chunks of information were included not because they shed new light, but because they let Sawin paraphrase an unpublished letter, or because she failed to weed out the incidental from the truly significant, or because her evident fondness for certain of her informants clouded her judgment as to their relative importance—which might explain why a few second-stringers are given a disproportionate amount of coverage.

This imbalance is the book's greatest weakness. It obscures the broad lines of Sawin's twin themes—the true adventures of Surrealism in the Wild West, and how the natives appropriated some of its fire—and it leaves us with the hollow sense of a purely artistic encounter. Reading this book, one gets the unnerving impression of watching a cast of artist-automatons going about the business of producing, exhibiting and quarreling over a vast series of canvases. What is often missing is the personal dimension, a recognition that we are dealing with men and women who did indeed create art, but who also had loves and hates, moments of pettiness and grandeur, that made them more than just the names on gallery posters. Although Sawin has more information at her disposal than any of her predecessors, the heart of her story, the human quirks and needs that helped transmute the Surrealist immigration of the 1940s into the New York School of the 1950s, remains very much between the lines.

This may in part be owed to the inconvenient truth that, as Sawin concludes in a curious moment of self-negation, the Surrealists might have had less to do with the evolution of American art than she has been claiming. As she sums it up:

> Possibly the Surrealist presence was not needed for the liberation of the American artist's mind and hand that automatism helped to effect.... Probably the atmosphere of urgency generated by world-wide war and the daily fact of so much death ... had far more impact on New York artists than the presence of a few émigrés in Greenwich Village and western Connecticut.

(Surrealism may have had its biggest influence on American art in poetry, through its absorption, a generation later, by such New Yorkers as Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch and Ron Padgett.)

Perhaps, too, it is because this is ultimately the story of a rendezvous manqué. The American artists, despite their initial enthusiasm, don't really seem to have understood the Surrealists any more than the Surrealists—who often didn't even bother feigning interest—understood them. Fundamentally preoccupied by questions of technique, convinced of both the validity of art (as a concept) and their nation's military and economic supremacy (as a political fact), the Americans really had little to say to, or hear from, a dazed group of Frenchmen whose training had been in denigrating culture and who had just fled a republic in collapse. Moreover, the young New Yorkers were unabashedly hungry for recognition, while the Surrealists, at least on paper, denounced artistic careerism above all. The more the two sides appeared to be in agreement, the more it seems they were speaking passionately at cross-purposes.

In this regard, perhaps the book's most telling anecdote concerns the American painter William Baziotes, who after years of living hand-to-mouth was given $450 to exhibit in a Surrealist show. Sawin, relating the incident, describes this financial windfall as partaking "of that aura of the marvelous that [Baziotes] identified with Surrealism." As marvelous as spotting a fiver on the sidewalk just when you needed one. In a grave north of Paris, Breton might well be spinning.

MARK POLIZZOTTI is author of *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

The Stealth Revolution

BY ANDREW KULL

The Supreme Court Reborn: The Constitutional Revolution in the Age of Roosevelt by William E. Leuchtenburg

(Oxford University Press, 350 pp., $30)

Americans like the idea of government according to a written constitution, scarcely noting the fact that the modern United States is fundamentally at odds with its constitutional blueprint. The Constitution describes a federal government, but we live today under a national one. The divergence between theory and practice is not necessarily a bad thing: it would be remarkable, after all, if a plan of government devised in 1787 could happily accommodate twentieth-century politics without substantial modification. The discrepancy is an embarrassment to judges, however, if they claim (as ours do) the power and the duty to refuse enforcement to any law not constitutionally authorized.

The "Constitutional Revolution of 1937," in which the Supreme Court abruptly ceased to oppose the modern expansion of federal authority, was not really about the division of power between the states and the nation. That reallocation had been under way at least since the Civil War, and it was going to happen with or without the Supreme Court. The revolution was in the role of the Court itself, which surrendered its longstanding claim to a power it could scarcely exercise: the power, that is, to enforce the constitutional plan of government if the people and their representatives chose to disregard it.

The American habit is to assume that constitutional interpretation is self-evidently a judicial function—this was John Marshall's argument in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803)—but to put judges in charge of the political framework is neither logically inevitable nor common practice in other democracies. When it gave up the defense of federalism in 1937, the Court abdicated a self-appointed role. Its surrender was institutionally costly, however, because the standard justification for judicial review makes it an all-or-nothing proposition. If judges are seen to be enforcing only those parts of the Constitution they want to (or can get away with), the standard justification is gone. The importance of the revolution of 1937 is that it makes it harder to explain why we should ever allow the Supreme Court to

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tell us what to do.

The Court's about-face was executed under the immediate threat of Roosevelt's court-packing plan, and it is customary to regard the episode as a straight political tug-of-war: laissez-faire vs. the New Deal, Nine Old Men vs. FDR. This was how contemporaries viewed the Court battle; it is also the perspective of William Leuchtenburg's articles on the subject, collected in this volume; it is perfectly accurate so far as it goes. The official story says nothing about a compromise of judicial review in 1937, because it assumes that the Court was wrong in 1936. The Court had held that major pieces of New Deal legislation (the NRA, the AAA, the Guffey Coal Act) were beyond the power of Congress to enact; the impasse was resolved when the Court acknowledged that, in our complex modern world, a power to regulate "commerce ... among the several States" permitted Congress to regulate most aspects of social and economic life. For a number of reasons, though, this face-saving account will not do.

The text of the Constitution (and everything we know about the circumstances in which it was composed and ratified) makes it clear that the federal government was to exercise its enumerated powers to the exclusion of all others. "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined," wrote Madison in *Federalist 45*. "Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite," extending to "all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people." Obviously it has not worked out that way. We have a national government, exercising a centralized authority like that of every other modern nation, and it is hard to imagine how the course of history in this regard could have been significantly different. But this departure from the written plan leaves judges in an awkward position.

The answer is not simply to give the Constitution a modern interpretation. The standard argument for making judges the guardians of constitutionality, advanced by Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist 78* and by Marshall in *Marbury*, suggests that the Constitution is a higher law, enacted by the people to bind the lawmakers, enforced by judges like any other law until the people (by amendment) give different instructions. The logic of this argument requires that constitutional limitations be enforced as written, not modified in the light of what judges might think new circumstances require. "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is," as Marshall famously asserted; but if we want a Constitution that adapts itself to the needs of successive ages, it is difficult to explain, consistent with democratic principle, why judges should supervise that evolution rather than the people's elected representatives.

Nor can the difficulty be finessed by discovering a providential elasticity in "the great clauses" of the Constitution, those that delegate national power over commerce and defense, taxing and spending. If we interpret any of them to confer a general legislative authority—incidentally rendering a lot of the Constitution superfluous—we destroy the careful allocation between state and federal that was the whole point of the enumeration. The subversive logic of indirect effects was what Thomas Jefferson was already complaining about in 1800: "Congress are authorized to defend the nation. Ships are necessary for defense; copper is necessary for ships; mines necessary for copper; a company necessary to work the mines; and who can doubt this reasoning who has ever played at 'This is the House that Jack built'?"

The New Deal provoked a constitutional crisis because it raised the question of the house that Jack built in terms that could not be avoided. If Congress could regulate prices or labor relations on the ground that it was regulating interstate commerce, the same logic (as experience has since confirmed) would authorize Congress to regulate anything. In attempting to resist that outcome, however, the Court occupied defensive ground that could not withstand a political siege.

"The distinction between direct and indirect effects of intrastate transactions upon interstate commerce," according to Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, was "essential to the maintenance of our constitutional system." Otherwise "there would be virtually no limit to the Federal power, and for all practical purposes we should have a completely centralized government." This was impeccable reasoning, advanced to support an untenable position. FDR's impatient demand that we "restore to the Federal Government the powers which exist in the national Governments of every other Nation in the world" made too much political sense to be answered by these legalisms. The only question was whether the Constitution would be amended to give the national government the powers that a majority of Americans assumed it should exercise. And since the reality of national power was a foregone conclusion, what hung in the balance was not federalism but judicial review.

William E. Leuchtenburg is a distinguished historian of twentieth-century American politics who is not particularly interested in constitutional law. His new book contains scarcely a word to acknowledge that significant legal principles were at stake in the Court's opposition to the New Deal. As a result we see a constitutional revolution without constitutional substance, in which a narrow majority of the Court opposed its political will to that of the administration until its least stalwart members (Charles Evans Hughes and Owen Roberts) could no longer take the heat. Good and bad can be very clearly drawn in this version of the story, the "revolution" it describes was about the desirability of social welfare legislation—an issue we are invited to decide from the perspective of an unemployed railroad worker or a chambermaid struggling to get by without a minimum wage.

The focus of Leuchtenburg's treatment is thus social and political rather than legal, which is not to say that it is either uninteresting or wrong. The book is a somewhat miscellaneous collection of articles and lectures, for the most part previously published, centering on the court-packing fight but ranging as far afield as Justice Holmes's 1927 opinion in *Buck* v. *Bell* ("Three generations of imbeciles are enough") and the controversy surrounding Hugo Black's appointment to the Court when

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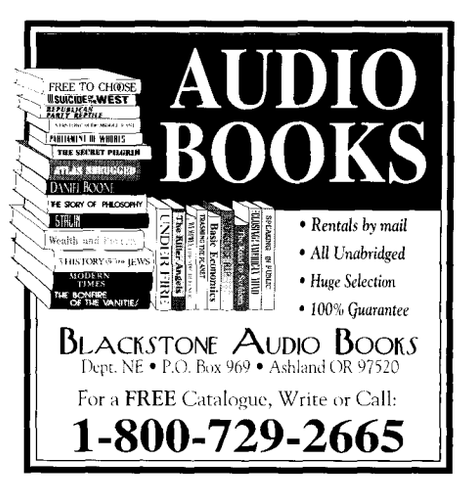

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it transpired, shortly after his confirmation, that he had formerly been a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Leuchtenburg's account of these episodes is lucid, informative and gracefully written. His careful narrative of FDR's court-packing initiative, in particular, sheds considerable light on the legal questions that the author himself does not choose to pursue.

The heart of the book is a revised version of an enormously useful article, originally published thirty years ago, on "The Origins of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'Court-Packing' Plan." For any reader who is looking to see what happened to the Constitution in 1937, Leuchtenburg here supplies the critical data. First, that the immediate result of the Court's intransigence toward the New Deal was to draw into question, not the power of the national government, but the power of judicial review. Second, that the textbook solution to the apparent impasse—a constitutional amendment expanding national authority to accommodate twentieth-century needs—was extensively considered but ultimately rejected by the administration. Finally, that FDR and his advisers were disinclined to amend the Constitution because in so doing they would be acknowledging that the Court was right. Leaving the Constitution alone, by contrast, left the justices in a position from which they could only retreat.

When they challenged judicial authority to speak for the Constitution, Roosevelt and his supporters recapitulated positions taken by the Court's adversaries ever since *Marbury*. Most direct was the threat of simple defiance. Anticipating an adverse ruling—wrongly, as it turned out—on the status of promises to pay in gold following a devaluation of the dollar, FDR prepared a radio address announcing his intention to disregard the Court's decision and to regulate the payment of debts by emergency decree. (Roosevelt's undelivered speech invoked Abraham Lincoln and *Dred Scott*, but a better analogy was Andrew Jackson's reputed remark that "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it.") A year later, FDR told Harold Ickes that he was still considering the possibilities of confrontation. When the Court declared a law unconstitutional, Roosevelt suggested, he might "go to Congress and ask it to instruct him whether he was to follow the mandate of Congress or the mandate of the Court." If so instructed, he would "carry out the will of Congress through the offices of the United States Marshals and ignore the Court."

Scores of bills and constitutional amendments limiting the power of the Court were introduced in Congress, more than a hundred during the 1936 session alone. Typical proposals required a supermajority vote of the justices to hold a law unconstitutional, or withdrew the Court's jurisdiction to hear appeals in certain kinds of cases. A constitutional amendment proposed by Burton K. Wheeler, the Democratic senator from Montana, authorized Congress to overrule a Supreme Court determination of unconstitutionality by re-enacting a challenged law, by a two-thirds vote, after an intervening election. The possibility of such an appeal from the Court to Congress had once been proposed by John Marshall himself, at a moment when things looked bad for Federalist judges, as a way to avoid a more dangerous clash between the judiciary and the political branches.

The simpler approach was to loosen the constraints of judicial review by changing the composition of the Court. Congress has the power to fix by ordinary legislation the number of justices. FDR's proposal in January 1937 was to add one justice, to a maximum of fifteen, for every member who continued to serve after reaching the age of 70. It would not have been the first time the size of the Court had been adjusted for overtly political ends: Congress after the Civil War reduced it (from ten to seven, as vacancies should occur) to prevent Andrew Johnson from making appointments that might jeopardize Reconstruction. But Roosevelt presented his plan with the disingenuous explanation that a superannuated Supreme Court was unable to keep up with the press of work. This was an error of political judgment, making it at once easy for opponents to attack the plan as dishonest, and difficult for the administration to claim its rightful victory when the Supreme Court capitulated within ten weeks of the plan's announcement.

The first sign of surrender was a 5-4 decision affirming the constitutionality of a state-imposed minimum wage for women, reversing a contrary 5-4 decision announced less than a year before. Justice Roberts's change of heart—"the switch in time that saved the nine"—struck "freedom of contract" from the Court's unwritten list of Fourteenth Amendment guarantees. (In the Fourteenth Amendment area, as distinct from the problem of federalism, the Constitutional Revolution brought about a dramatic change of direction without any surrender of judicial influence: the Court's modern emphasis on the expansion of individual rights draws on precisely the same constitutional authority as the decisions forbidding a minimum wage.)

Three weeks later, when it upheld the National Labor Relations Act, the Court abandoned its long struggle to keep the national government within constitutional limits. The line drawn in the sand by Chief Justice Hughes, when he called the distinction between direct and indirect effects on interstate commerce "essential to the maintenance

After the Vigil

for Jeanne

They turn up, no longer nameless,
their bodies clear, so nearly pure
they appear in morning light transparent.

They turn up one day and look at you
for the first time, their eyes sure now
you are one of theirs, surely here to stay.

They turn up wearing an expression of yours,
imitating your mouth, the smile perfected
over years of enduring amusing moments.

They turn up without a past, their fingers,
inexact instruments that examine what carpets
their turf, what they inherit through blood.

They turn up with your future, if not in mind
very much in the explosive story of their genes,
in gesture foreshadowing the what's-to-come.

They turn up with your hair—albeit not much
of it, something in the color, the curl of it
after the bath, its bearing after sleep.

They turn up already on their own, ideas
of their own, settling on their own limits,
their particular sense of things.

They turn up, and we have been waiting
as they have without knowing. They turn
into this world, keeping their own council.

DANIEL HALPERN

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of our constitutional system," was now scuffed away by the Chief Justice himself. Hughes ventured that "the question is necessarily one of degree." But if the question is one of degree, as Jefferson explained, the game is over; and with the exception this past term of gun-free school zones, the Court has never since discovered an effect on interstate commerce too indirect for national regulation.

The precise impact of court-packing on the Court has been questioned. There is evidence, for instance, that Justice Roberts switched his vote on the minimum wage before the president announced his plan. But this is a quibble, because Roosevelt's Judicial Reorganization Bill was merely the most salient aspect of the inexorable pressure confronting the Court following the November elections. By early 1937 it was reasonably clear that if the Court persisted in opposing the social initiatives of state and federal governments, its role in American politics would be significantly curtailed: by constitutional amendment, by overt manipulation of its jurisdiction or membership, or by successful defiance. The Chief Justice threw overboard the most onerous burden of judicial review, the thankless defense of federalism, and the Court resolved that it would henceforth fight only winnable battles.

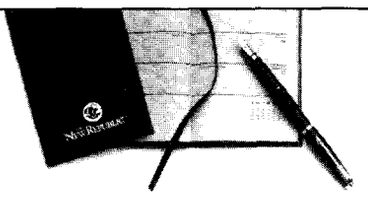
In the civics class version of American government, inadequate federal power would have been expanded to meet present national needs by means of a constitutional amendment. The possibility of an amendment in some form was under active consideration by the Roosevelt administration from mid-1935 until, approximately, the 1936 elections, when it must have been clear to FDR that he could manage the Court by other means. References to constitutional amendments during this period sometimes involved proposals (like Wheeler's) to restrict the power of the Court, but a "broadening amendment" increasing federal authority was also under discussion. Cautious possibilities included an amendment defining "interstate commerce," perhaps stating that Congress might regulate activities affecting commerce directly or indirectly. But the precise terms in which the federal power might be expanded had not yet been worked out when Roosevelt, never more than lukewarm toward the amendment idea, committed himself to another approach.

Opponents of an amendment, such as Robert H. Jackson, then an assistant attorney general, argued that it would take too long to agree on a formula, get it through Congress and obtain ratification by three-fourths of the states. More to the point, they feared that ratification was by no means certain. An amendment expanding national power would plainly have been passed by the overwhelming Democratic majorities in the new Congress, but its chances thereafter remain difficult to assess. If a ratification campaign were to be waged successfully, moreover, the president would have had to champion a cause he cared little about, leading a debate about constitutional law that could only distract attention from his political program.

The central fact about the Constitutional Revolution of 1937, from the perspective of constitutional law, is that the United States made a fundamental change in its system of government without formally amending the Constitution. To accommodate this development the Court retreated to a discretionary power of judicial review, asserting the duty to pass on the validity of some laws but not others. Such a judicial role is theoretically incoherent—if the judges are to look into the Constitution, protested Marshall, "what part of it are they forbidden to read, or to obey?"—but it seems to be a role with which Americans feel comfortable.

We might conclude instead, as Bruce Ackerman has suggested, that the Constitution *was* amended in 1937—not in the manner prescribed by Article V, but somehow as a function of the political moment. Between the alternatives there is less difference than might appear, since on either account it becomes impossible to ascertain the Constitution's present significance by merely reading the document. To learn which parts of it are currently being enforced, or else when (and just how) it was last "amended," we must inquire instead of a judicial priesthood. But the judges' own authority to speak is thereby drawn into question, since if we may change our form of government without changing the written constitution we have lost the democratic foundation that Hamilton and Marshall were able to claim for judicial review. The people of the United States who once debated and ratified the Constitution are now content to have it construed for them; and the Constitution is no longer, in consequence, an instrument by which the people bind their legislatures, their judges and themselves.

ANDREW KULL, professor of law at Emory University, is the author of *The Color-Blind Constitution* (Harvard University Press).



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SOUTH CAROLINA DIARIST

Name game

I HAD KNOWN MY FRIEND DAVID Marcelous Sneed for a while before I knew what to call him. I still have moments of doubt. To Yale University, he was David Sneed. And some people called him that. Close friends called him Marc. Not wanting to appear presumptuous, I tried not to commit to either, waiting instead for a signal. But none came. It seemed irrational for him to tolerate such ambiguity. It created a distance that I didn't understand, and couldn't traverse, and that distance seemed linked, unavoidably, to race. Marc was unfailingly polite, but when I asked a mutual friend how they referred to him at the office job he took after graduation, she replied bluntly, "David, because he doesn't want to let any of those mother fuckers get close to him."

I HAD BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY and hadn't seen Marc for a couple of years. But his bachelor party—a bunch of his uncles and hometown buddies sitting around a plate of barbecued pork and the ESPN college basketball game of the week in a cookie-cutter motel room off the South Carolina interstate—brought his personality back in a flash: low-key, un-self-conscious and open-minded. I came back into contact with his steady stream of laughter and the warmth of his impromptu multi-person bear hugs. Such behavior had been rare at Yale, where whites often sought absolution from blacks, and blacks often sought authenticity by separating themselves from whites. In this dysfunctional dance, whites needed to mimic black rhetoric to feel morally secure, because their ideological commitments amounted to little more than a belief that some identities were more valid than others. Anything co-opted by the white liberal establishment, meanwhile, became useless to black students deeply afraid that accepting the poisoned fruit of entry into a prestigious white institution would leave them in a cultural no-man's-land.

STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS flattered themselves that they were facing up to racial dilemmas that the rest of society preferred to evade. But, in fact, the dilemmas that obsessed them had little relevance outside the campus gates. Questions of authenticity and absolution are peripheral to America's larger racial quandary because most blacks don't feel upwardly mobile enough to have their identity threatened by assimilation, and most whites aren't economically secure enough to feel guilty. But this was what racial identity looked like once it had fallen prey to the self-absorption of a young, isolated, multicultural elite. That netherworld held no appeal for Marc. The white Southerners he played pool with never feigned the radicalism that liberal whites often offered blacks in cheap attempts at solidarity. Perhaps their distaste for this hypocrisy was their bond. At first, Marc's role in this apolitical interaction struck me as fatalistic because politics runs deeply through his veins. It wasn't really fatalism though, but something like a tolerance for external ambiguity and contradiction based upon inner strength. At least that's what I decided after two friends and I bundled into a car and drove to a small town in the South Carolina low country to see our friend get married.

MARC HAD ALREADY PLANTED AN image of his hometown in my mind before I arrived. It was of a sweet-faced white girl standing in between her father's legs and yelling "nigger" across a street. I remember Marc describing her father's eyes, eyes daring him to react. And his mother's advice on how to respond: "When you're standing in the tiger's mouth," she said, "you've got to do his dance." She dispensed it from the trailer where she raised him, a grounded three-room behemoth cluttered with the debating and academic awards that paved his all-American success story. And he took her advice to heart. Surveying Main Street on his wedding morning, Marc divided his town's businesses into two groups: those suspected of being owned by the Klan and those that probably were not. It was in this environment that Marc worked summers at the local fast-food joint, where he won the affection of its white manager, and, crucially, the reputation as one of the good boys in town.

HIS MOTHER'S ADVICE MIGHT have proved useful around a Yale pool table as well. It taught about living with boundaries without accepting them, about biding one's time and about remembering what whites might more easily forget: that the opportunities America offers are fraught with danger. "Do you know anyone like me who has ever really succeeded?" he asked me once. Huh? "I mean, how many poor, dark-skinned black men raised in rural Southern towns who aren't the sons of ministers can you think of who have made it to positions of prominence in this society?" Silence. "Vernon Jordan comes close," he said to himself. This was a new question only to me. "But Jordan's mom was a caterer. More middle class." After the wedding, the congregants headed for a reception at the bride and groom's old junior high school. Elderly women in elaborate hats chattered about the teenage sweethearts who made it to the Ivy League, stayed together and came back home to get married. Relatives murmured about how Marc's grandfather, who grew up distilling illicit liquor in the Georgia backwoods, had downed the better part of a bottle of Tanqueray the night before. Marc took his grandma onto the dance floor, and I remembered how adamant he had been about returning home. Through our senior year he had talked endlessly about buying some farm land, going shrimping at the shore and reconnecting to the church of his childhood. And he made it easy to think no one in their right mind would choose to live anywhere else. "In New York or Washington I'd just be just another black person," he said once. "Back home I don't have anything left to prove."

AFTERNOON DRIFTED INTO EVENING, and two Jews, a Puerto Rican and an Indian seemed to blend in among 400 black people from the South Carolina low country. It was a great relief to be in Marc's world, and in its expansive, infectious joy, without having to first go through some tortured moral reckoning. It was that rarest of things, a cross-racial interaction untainted by politics. But at 2:45 a.m., with Marc's honeymoon already well on its way, mine ended. My friends and I pulled into a Store 24 in a poor Savannah neighborhood and the shivering woman behind the register told us we would have to order through a slit in the window because it was just too dangerous for her to unlock the door. And I realized that the gulf between the world where I live and Marc's world was as wide as ever. I remembered Marc talking, many years ago, of a rage that he feared might consume him. All of which made politics-free friendship seem like thin stuff indeed, the personal equivalent of pundits who clamor for racial healing without ever looking deeply into the wound. Not a path worthy of my friend, and certainly not one that will lead him, one day, to tell me to call him Marc.

PETER BEINART

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AMNIO TO GENOME

Research on genetic diseases – notably many diseases of childhood – is entering an exciting, promising new phase. As scientists intensify the process of deciphering the secrets of the human genetic blueprint, their findings yield critical new clues to the development of genetic diseases and to the search for new therapies. ❧ The figures are staggering: deciphering the blueprint means the ultimate sequencing of 3,000,000,000 letters of the human genetic code. Genetic diseases number about 5,000. ❧ The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, takes pride in its commitment to both these research challenges. Years ago, discoveries in a Weizmann laboratory led to the first uses of amniocentesis to examine the fetus and diagnose hereditary illnesses. Among current projects on the Weizmann agenda are studies of fundamental embryonic development, Down syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, insulin substitutes and vaccinations against juvenile diabetes. The establishment of the Bioinformatics Genome Research Center on the Weizmann campus underscores the growing contributions of Institute scientists to the World Human Genome Project. ❧ It's another example of how support for basic scientific research yields practical benefits previously beyond reach.

The Weizmann Institute, founded in 1934, is a community of 2,300 scientists, engineers and scientists-in-training engaged in a full agenda of 800 research projects ranging from basic medical diseases to chemistry, physics, agriculture, computer science and the environment, research in cancer, AIDS, neurosciences and children's

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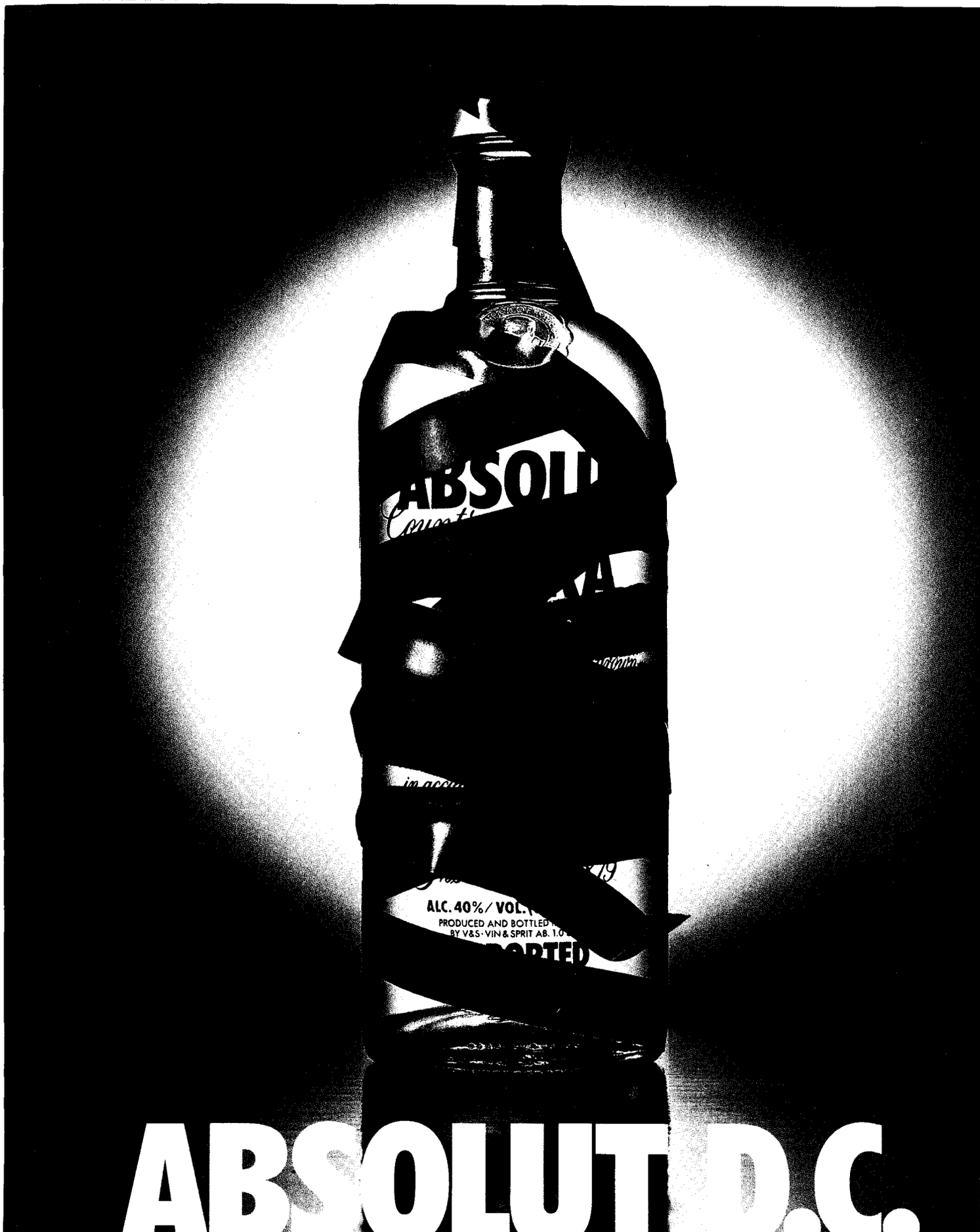

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